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The provincial archive as a place of memory: confronting oral and written sources on the role of former slaves in the Cuban war of independence (1895-98)

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THE PROVINCIAL ARCHIVE AS A PLACE OF MEMORY:
CONFRONTING ORAL AND WRITTEN SOURCES ON
THE ROLE OF FORMER SLAVES IN THE CUBAN
WAR OF INDEPENDENCE (1895-98)

Few questions of historical interpretation are more passionately debated than those that have become intertwined with a national narrative and transformed into elements in the definition of how a country came to be what it is imagined to be.¹ For the island nation of Cuba, political independence was forged in a lengthy series of late-nineteenth-century wars against Spanish colonial rule, ending in a direct encounter with U.S. expansionism. Those wars began in 1868 and concluded in 1898 with the departure of Spanish troops, followed by a military occupation of the island by U.S. forces. In 1902 the Cuban republic emerged, but was bound by the infamous Platt Amendment, which guaranteed the United States a right of renewed intervention. The wars themselves were thus both a triumph and a defeat, a touchstone for national pride and – in the outcome – a source of nationalist disappointment.

Each political generation in Cuba interpreted the wars of independence anew, trying to incorporate the heroes and the dynamic of those wars into a story that legitimated – or, in the hands of critics, challenged – the subsequent

1. With the collaboration of Orlando García Martínez (Archivo Provincial de Cienfuegos) and Michael Zeuske (Universität zu Köln), this essay was originally presented at the November 2, 2000 session of the seminar, "Archives, Documentation, and the Institutions of Social Memory," sponsored by the Advanced Study Center of the International Institute, University of Michigan. It was later delivered at the Boston-area workshop on Latin American history, held at the David Rockefeller Center for Latin American Studies. Scott, García, and Zeuske would like to thank the participants in both seminars, particularly Francis Blouin, Monica Burguera, Alf Lüdtke, William Rosenberg, John Coatsworth, and Barbara Corbett, and the anonymous reviewers for *NWIG*. Rebecca Scott also thanks Sueann Caulfield, Alejandro de la Fuente, Ada Ferrer, Aims McGuinness, Peter Railton, Anne Scott, John Scott-Railton, and Thomas Scott-Railton for helpful suggestions on the text. All translations are mine.

order of things. After the victory of the Cuban Revolution in 1958-59, the new leadership undertook a process of socialist construction that was also a refusal of U.S. hegemony, and the active recollection of past struggles became a key element in the legitimation of current ones. By the 1970s, the sweep of Cuban history came to be officially described as *cien años de lucha*, one hundred years of struggle. The 1895-98 war and selected members of its pantheon of heroes – particularly José Martí and Antonio Maceo – had been folded into a continuous battle against external imperial enemies and domestic anti-patriots, and the 1959 triumph construed as the apotheosis of the formation of the Cuban nation.²

Such an interpretation required that one of the most delicate questions in Cuban history – that of race and slavery – be handled somewhat gingerly. Some of the heroes of the first war for independence (1868-78) had been slave-owners. In the postrevolutionary context it became important to emphasize the moment at which they liberated their slaves rather than the long years during which they had profited from slave labor, or the constraints they had imposed on those they nominally freed.³ Other officers and soldiers in the wars of independence had been former slaves or the descendants of slaves. In the climate of revolutionary enthusiasm after 1959, these earlier black and mulatto rebels came to be seen as the embodiment of a struggle for social justice as well as for national independence, their efforts to break the chains of colonialism a continuation of prior struggles to escape or break the chains of slavery. But it was important that they be seen to have struggled primarily as *Cubans*, striving toward a transracial national liberation, and not as black rebels locked into an inconclusive conflict with a hesitant white nationalist leadership. In the postrevolutionary view, black and white rebels by 1895-98 shared ideals of racial “confraternity” that were later betrayed by the compromised twentieth-century republics, but then vindicated by the more recent revolutionary process.⁴

2. For an early and careful examination of the ideology of one hundred years of struggle, see the essay by Pérez (1995).

3. Already in 1961 the Afro-Cuban Marxist philosopher and activist Walterio Carbonell saw this as a misguided strategy, and called on the revolutionary leadership to cease seeking validation through the canonization of slaveholding founding fathers. Carbonell later ended up ostracized, his position apparently characterized as racially divisive. See the impassioned plea in Carbonell 1961. On Carbonell’s subsequent fate, see Thomas 1971:1433.

4. A subtle and enduring expression of this national narrative is Barnet. The classic enunciation by a historian is in Ibarra (1972:21): “By proclaiming ethnic confraternity, juridical equality, and political liberty, the revolutionary vanguard of 1868 laid the definitive groundwork for the formation of the Cuban nation.” For an interesting critical view from the *pre-revolutionary* period, see Cepero Bonilla 1948.

In describing the national narrative in this way, I do not mean to suggest that it was merely a convenient invention or a conscious distortion. The story of the achievement of Cuban national independence *is* a stirring one, and the transracial ideal of Cuban nationality that held sway at the turn of the nineteenth to the twentieth century was an ideological and social achievement of remarkable dimensions. One has only to contrast it with the Anglo-Saxonism that had developed in the United States by mid-century, or the systematic disfranchisement of African-Americans allowed to stand by the U.S. Supreme Court in a key decision in 1903, in order to be impressed by Cuba's accomplishment.⁵ The 1901 Cuban Constitution, though often scorned for its incorporation of the Platt Amendment, was equally notable for its categorical guarantee of universal manhood suffrage, despite pressures from the U.S. occupiers to institute more restrictive measures.⁶ Cuban society, just fifteen years after slave emancipation, endorsed a formal definition of citizenship that mirrored the famous statement attributed to Antonio Maceo, that in Cuba there were neither whites nor blacks, but only Cubans. This forthright assertion was grounded both in Maceo's principled antiracism and in the unity that he sought to build in the wars of independence.⁷ When the wars were over, one of the strongest guarantors of such equality was the presence of black veterans whose sense of entitlement as citizens was unmistakable.

For historians, however, a coherent and in many ways admirable national narrative can be both an inspiration to research and a significant obstacle to understanding. By 1994-95, when the collective project I will describe shortly was taking shape, the currents of challenge to this aspect of the Cuban national narrative were unmistakable. In 1995 Aline Helg published an innovative work entitled *Our Rightful Share: The Afro-Cuban Struggle for Equality, 1886-1912*, in which she criticized many of Cuba's national heroes and denounced what she saw as a "myth of racial equality" that "undermined the formation of a black collective consciousness." A key element of this myth, in her view, was a false portrait of the 1895-98 war: "the myth inculcated the idea that racial equality had been achieved in the Cuban military forces that fought against Spain" (Helg 1995:16). At the same time, Ada

5. On the *national*, as opposed to simply Southern, dimensions of the endorsement of black disfranchisement in the United States, see Pildes 2000.

6. The pioneering work on the debate concerning suffrage is that of De la Fuente 1999, elaborated in *A Nation for All*, 2001.

7. Ibarra (1972:51) gives the phrase as "Young man, here there are not whites, nor blacks, but only Cubans." Ibarra dates it to 1870, but unfortunately gives no primary source citation. The meaning of the phrase itself, if these are indeed the words Maceo uttered, is ambiguous, for he uses not the terms *blanco* and *negro*, which could be construed as racial descriptors, but *blanquitos* and *negritos*, diminutive terms that could be seen as derogatory. It is thus not entirely clear whether Maceo was rejecting racial categories as such, or their derogatory variants.

Ferrer was completing a doctoral dissertation on race and nationality in the period of the Cuban wars of independence, subsequently published as *Insurgent Cuba: Race, Nation, and Revolution 1868-1898*. Ferrer demonstrated the continued coexistence within Cuban national ideology of racism and antiracism. In contrast to Helg, Ferrer emphasized that nationalist ideas and the experience of shared military struggle served both as a cover for discrimination and as a weapon *against* discrimination.⁸

Within Cuba, young scholars had begun to pose questions about the remembering of national heroes and the representation of the *mambí*, the Cuban separatist soldier.⁹ The distinguished Cuban philosopher Fernando Martínez Heredia pointed more and more insistently to the role of racism in Cuban history – not racism as a “legacy” of slavery alone, but racism as an active ideology integrally connected to Cuban nationalism (see Martínez Heredia 2001). The historian Jorge Ibarra (2001) directly engaged Helg’s portrait of the founding figures of Cuban independence, conceding portions of her argument while vigorously refusing her effort to locate the origins of the “myth of racial democracy” in the leadership of the Cuban revolutionary army of 1895-98. Ibarra situated such mythmaking and opportunism as there was in the twentieth-century republic itself, not the independence struggle.¹⁰

In this context, the study of black and mulatto soldiers in the wars of independence, their experiences and aspirations, and the opportunities and exclusions that they faced, became a matter for urgent examination – and immediate contention. The presence of former slaves among the rebels, and of black officers within the insurgent ranks, was invoked on every side of the debate – yet even so basic a datum as their approximate numbers could not be estimated. Much of the polemic involved re-readings of familiar texts, and attributions and re-attributions of motives. Ada Ferrer (1999) broke new ground by looking carefully at recruitment and surrenders, as reflected in Cuban and Spanish archives, and by giving a close reading to rebel correspondence and to the memoir literature, including the rarely-cited autobiography of a black soldier, Ricardo Batrell Oviedo. But because Ferrer’s focus was the entire island over the thirty years of anticolonial warfare, and because most lists of rebels included no racial labels, even she found it difficult to describe the social composition of the Ejército Libertador with precision.

A logical next step was to narrow the focus enough to get closer to the ground in a particular zone, to plunge into local and regional archives to see if there was some way to circumvent the silence on race imposed first by the

8. See also De la Fuente (1999) for a distinction between racial democracy as a project and racial democracy as a *fait accompli*.

9. One such study subsequently appeared as a book: León Rosabal 1997.

10. See the essay by Ibarra 2001. As with the work of Martínez Heredia, Ibarra’s criticisms circulated orally and in typescript for some time before reaching print.

record-keepers, and later by protective nationalists. In the mid-1990s, as politicians and scholars began to prepare for the centennial of the end of the 1895-98 war, several historians were converging on a single region on the south coast of the island, Cienfuegos. During the second half of the nineteenth century, the river valleys of Cienfuegos had been ideal for the growing, processing, and transporting of sugar, and the region had developed into a major plantation zone. Cienfuegos was, moreover, a dramatic theater of war in the final independence struggle. With thousands of former slaves and a large rebel brigade, its history could provide an ideal case study.

More important, however, was the quality of its local archive. The provincial archive, located on 27th street, just off the Plaza Martí, occupies the first floor of a converted house, next to a preschool playground, and directly opposite a fire station. Researches and deliberations there are thus invariably accompanied, though the open windows, by sirens and diesel engines in time of fire or fire drill, and, more often, by the young firemen's baseball practice, catcalls, and conscientious washing of the trucks with the fire hoses when there are no fires. The permeability of the reading room to sound is matched by the vulnerability of the whole building to weather: tropical storms blow holes in the roof, sending water pouring down. The decision of the upstairs neighbors to raise pigs on their terrace did not improve matters.

But the richness of the holdings and the vitality of the intellectual life in and around the archive compensate for these *inconvenientes*. Cienfuegos is a city known not only for its sugar-exporting port, but also for its music, its architecture, and its revolutionary traditions. The archive's director, Orlando García Martínez, born in a working-class neighborhood of the town and trained as a historian at the University of Las Villas during the 1970s, has been tenacious in pulling documents of all kinds into the archive, while serving also as president of the provincial UNEAC, the union of writers and artists. He has succeeded in preserving the municipality's voluminous notarial records, judicial records, and minutes of the town council, reflecting both the history of the town and of its agricultural hinterland. García, moreover, has developed a reputation for being willing to retrieve that which other state agencies plan to throw away, lining up trucks to bring the bundles to the archive instead of to the paper recycling facility. Thus the Cienfuegos archive now holds some of the judicial records of the larger provincial capital of Santa Clara, the municipal records of the key sugar town of Santa Isabel de las Lajas, the original drafts of the 1961 cadastral survey of property in the entire region, and the before, during, and after writing samples of every person from Cienfuegos taught to read and write during the revolutionary Literacy Campaign of the early 1960s.¹¹

11. For a guide to the holdings of this and other provincial, municipal, and local archives, see Pérez, Jr. & Scott 2002.

García knows most of these collections of documents well, and has long been writing the history of the region, including a close examination of its wartime experiences. The archive's emergence as a locus for the study of race and revolution, however, dates to the arrival there in 1994 of a visiting researcher, Michael Zeuske. Born in Halle, East Germany, Zeuske was trained by the distinguished historian Manfred Kossok of the University of Leipzig, wrote his doctoral dissertation on an early nationalist movement in Venezuela, and prepared a second doctorate on Latin American independence struggles in comparative perspective. His scholarly formation inclined him to look at the big picture, and to seek parallels between Latin American and European revolutions. But with the emergence of a movement of popular contestation on his home ground of Leipzig during 1989, and the fall of the Berlin wall later that year, followed by the dramatic transformation of the East German academic climate, Zeuske chose to shift his research focus. He moved away from the macrostructural analysis of revolution, and sought to understand a social movement from the inside. He decided, moreover, to undertake sustained research in Cuba, where he had lived as a boy in 1963-65, when his father, Max Zeuske, had been a visiting East German specialist on assignment with the new revolutionary Cuban government, charged with assisting in the formation of the first Worker-Peasant Faculty in Havana.

Michael Zeuske brought to the documentary riches of the Cienfuegos archives a new and inherently volatile question: what *was* the actual pattern of political incorporation of former slaves in rural Cuba, after the abolition of slavery in 1886? Did they indeed join the anticolonial movement in large numbers in 1895, or were they perhaps drawn into the webs of political clientelism that expanded as the Spanish colonial state lowered property requirements for voting and made room for a legitimated Cuban "autonomism" in the 1880s and 1890s? Zeuske began work in the archives of Santa Clara and Cienfuegos, compiling vast lists of rebel soldiers, and scrutinizing them assiduously.

Painstaking scrutiny was necessary because racial labels almost never appear on lists of this kind. The strength of the transracial, or race-blind, ideal of nationality was such that Cuban separatists generally declined to record racial attributions when drawing up recruitment lists, and the victorious Cuban nationalists also refrained from including them when they compiled nominal records of rebel veterans. In effect, the written record was intentionally designed to ratify José Martí and Antonio Maceo's principle of race-blindness. It thus erased evidence of racial distinctions. Even if such attributions had been consequential in social interactions, and frequently uttered as explicit labels, they would not appear in the written record. The challenge for Zeuske was to find some way of identifying the social – and perhaps racial – categories that were behind the lists he had found, but which the lists themselves never employed.

This same problem had plagued my own comparative work on postemancipation societies. In both Cuba and Brazil – in sharp contrast to the United States – former slaves were usually not identified as such in most written records, and thus from the point of view of the documents, they vanished into a vast rural population, however unlikely it might be that their status as former slaves had disappeared in social practice.¹² I was trying to work around this archival obstacle by identifying individual slaves who had lived on particular plantations, and following them into freedom through plantation records for the 1880s and 1890s. Particularly detailed documents existed for two adjacent plantations – Soledad and Santa Rosalía – located a few miles from the town of Cienfuegos. I decided to restrict my focus to that region in the hope that I might learn enough through the history of identifiable individuals to be able to trace more generally the situation of former slaves and their descendants. So in 1996, I too ended up smelling the diesel of the fire trucks from the reading room of the Provincial Archive of Cienfuegos.

The point here is not to marvel at the coincidences that brought three strangers together, one from central Cuba, one from Saxony, and one from Michigan, and turned them into friends and collaborators. After all, life is full of such coincidences. What is more interesting is the way in which working in a specific regional archive nourished three different methodological approaches to these questions, and opened up possibilities for expansion of the basis for research itself, particularly through the avenue of oral history. The oral histories in turn “electrified,” to use Michael Zeuske’s phrase, the whole enterprise. I shall quickly sketch the three methodologies, and preliminary findings, and then turn to the oral history – at which point the archive appears, as in my title, as a place of active remembering rather than simply a place of documents.

First, Zeuske’s approach. Concentrating on the lists of recruits that he had compiled, and on the Cienfuegos sugar zones of Santa Isabel de las Lajas and Cruces, he set out to estimate the proportion of those in the rebel ranks who were actually former slaves, based on what he described as a “structural/name-based” technique. After identifying what he believed to be the major “slave surnames” for Lajas and Cruces, those adopted by slaves from the largest plantations as they achieved their freedom, he combed the enlistment records to find them. To our collective surprise he came up with very low estimates of the numbers of former slaves among the rebels. He even noted that the names of former slaves from Lajas and Cruces were more likely to be found on the lists of those who voted in the colonial elections in favor of the mild-mannered Autonomists, not in the ranks of the Cuban rebels. When he began to present these results, several of us critiqued his methods and thought

12. See the afterword to the second edition of Scott 2000, and the introduction to Scott *et al.* 1988.

that his estimates had to be wrong (see Zeuske 2001). In all our minds, the independence war has long been linked to the fight against slavery, and it seemed somehow logical that former slaves would naturally gravitate to the rebel ranks. What did it mean if they did not?

Based in the archive itself, with very few material resources but a great deal of determination, Orlando García decided, in 1997, to tackle the issue of the social composition of the Liberation Army head-on, undertaking the compilation of a relational database that would include every soldier who served in the Cienfuegos Brigade of the rebel army between 1895 and 1898. One by one, using pension records, manuscript recruitment lists, notarial archives, and published lists of veterans, he began to develop not a mere sample, but a complete portrait of one brigade. By the brute force method of reading every available record, he would try to create a mini-biography for each soldier. In the process, he came across racial labels for individuals in collateral records, particularly the baptismal records sometimes included with pension requests, even though such labels are absent from the military records. He was by this means able to develop something of a statistical profile of the composition of the force – though of course the racial labels, like any contingent and relational social construction, shift and turn from document to document.

The risks and the benefits of this strategy are equally clear. It takes the patience of a saint to assemble and complete over a thousand such personal dossiers, rigorously maintaining the source references necessary to follow up on any detail as necessary. Moreover, computers are notoriously unhappy in a humid tropical environment beset by power outages. But García succeeded. At an international conference held at the Cienfuegos archive in March of 1998 he shared the first results, jolting one of Cuba's most distinguished historians, Jorge Ibarra, into a vigorous counterattack.

García argued that there were, in effect, two successive rebel armies in Cienfuegos. The first dated to 1895-96, and was predominately composed of men from the countryside, many of them black and mulatto. The early recruitment of rebels seems to have mirrored the composition of the rural working population of the Cienfuegos hinterland, and thus was nearly equally divided between those who traced their ancestry primarily to Spain or the Canary Islands, and those who traced it to Africa. Casualties in the early encounters with the Spanish forces were high. After a dramatic and disastrous set of rebel reverses in 1897, which brought large numbers of surrenders, the war settled into a harrowing stalemate. Net recruitment to the insurgent ranks fell below zero. Following the explosion of the USS *Maine* in early 1898, however, it began to appear likely that the United States itself might enter the war, and that Spain might actually lose. In 1898 new Cuban recruits to the rebellion appeared – but this time they were disproportionately white and urban, of some schooling, often professionals. By rebel policy, even if they did not have military training or experience, their degrees gave them immediate access to

officer status, thereby privileging them over longer-serving and more experienced black and mulatto soldiers (see García Martínez 2001).¹³

When the war ended in late 1898, many of the officers of this “second army” stepped forward to inherit the nationalist mantle – but many of the earlier black and mulatto officers and soldiers had been killed in battle or by disease, or were consciously sidelined.¹⁴ The chronology sketched by García for the Cienfuegos Brigade makes it easier to understand how very disparate images of race and the war experience might coexist, encompassing both a memory of black leadership and cross-racial collaboration, from 1895 through 1897, and a sense of displacement of black officers and soldiers by white ones, particularly as the war came to a close in 1898.

García’s findings also helped to explain why the war might raise very high expectations among Cubans of African descent, expectations which when disappointed would leave a legacy of bitterness. It is at this juncture that his findings intersected with the question of the defining of freedom in a postemancipation society. I had for some years been reading the correspondence of the administrators of the Santa Rosalía sugar plantation, papers which had come to rest – after the expropriation in the early 1960s of major sugar properties – in the National Library in Havana. I had also been gathering information on the adjacent Soledad plantation, owned by Edwin Atkins of Belmont, Massachusetts. These estates together held several hundred slaves, and were situated at the edge of and in the midst of the fighting during the 1868-78, 1879-80, and 1895-98 wars. Unlike Zeuske and García, I had begun not with lists of insurgents, but with lists of slaves and workers, and then worked forward, trying to figure out who had joined the insurgency and why, and what had become of those who did not join. The administrators’ correspondence, in conjunction with enlistment registers, made it clear that men with the surnames Sarría and Quesada, former slaves on these two estates, were important figures in the rebellion. The administrators insulted and disparaged them as bandits, but could not ignore them. Moreover, since I was tracing individuals, I was able to follow the paths of men and women who were involved with the insurgency in various ways, including those men who later left the rebel ranks.¹⁵

13. It was on this last point that Ibarra disagreed, arguing that the privileging of training and education was simply necessary to provide professionals such as doctors for the army. García countered with statistics showing that the number of doctors and lawyers was very small, and argued that in many cases such automatic officer status functioned as a class and racial privilege, rather than a pragmatic measure.

14. The best study of the dynamics of the process of sidelining is the essay by Ferrer (1998a) on the court martial of Quintín Bandera, also in Spanish (1998b) in Martínez, Scott & García.

15. This research has been incorporated into a forthcoming book, tentatively titled *Degrees of Freedom: Louisiana and Cuba after Slavery, 1862-1914*.

As I reconstruct the process of collective discovery – and I may be making it more linear and logical than it seemed at the time – we were able to break through the apparent contradictions of our various findings thanks to a series of fortuitous documentary discoveries, and thanks to the emergence of the Cienfuegos Provincial Archive in the spring of 1998 as a place of shared memory as well as scholarly inquiry. The very openness of the space of the archive to the world of Cienfuegos beyond it, such a risk for the documents that reside there, became a new source of life for the history they recorded.

Early in my research I had stumbled on a receipt for a mule claimed by a former slave, Ciriaco Quesada, after a showdown with the administrator of the Santa Rosalía plantation in August of 1899. The more closely I examined this incident, the more I became convinced that it reflected a widespread contest over rights to property and citizenship in the immediate aftermath of the war, one in which black and mulatto veterans played an important role.¹⁶ I began to wonder whether anyone named Quesada, descended from those families from Santa Rosalía, might still live in Cienfuegos. An ideal place to pose that question, it turned out, was the Provincial Archive itself. Schoolteachers and retired lawyers, schoolchildren and poets, and anyone needing a copy of a notarized document eventually end up at one of the tables in the reading room. When I mentioned my interest in locating individuals named Quesada to Félix Tellería, who is a *babalao* (*santería* priest), a geographer, and colleague of Orlando García in the Cienfuegos branch of the Union of Artists and Writers of Cuba, he recalled that one of his neighbors was a former schoolteacher named Araceli Quesada y Quesada. He thought her family might indeed have come from Soledad or Santa Rosalía. He would talk with her.

When I arrived at the archive a few days later, Araceli Quesada y Quesada was waiting for me, a flower in her hair and a sheaf of papers in her hands. She explained that she was only in her sixties, and therefore did not have memories going back terribly far – but that her aunt, Caridad Quesada, now blind and in her late seventies, knew a great deal. When Araceli Quesada had heard from Félix Tellería that I was doing research on Santa Rosalía, she took the initiative of asking her aunt some questions, and compiled about ten pages of notes on their conversation. Would I be interested in talking them over?

Caridad Quesada's memory, it turned out, was filled with stories, detailed genealogies, and songs, including epic political ballads sung by her uncle Cayetano Quesada. She also had been carefully taught the names of her cousins, near and far, so that she would not marry one by accident – and she was able to trace out the relations among dozens of the descendants of former slaves of Santa Rosalía. By the time we had finished going over these notes

16. An early version of this inquiry was presented at the 1998 conference in Cienfuegos and was published in Scott 1999 and then in Martínez, Scott & García 2001. A revised version appeared in Scott 2001.

with Araceli Quesada, Orlando García and I quickly decided that at the conference we were organizing for March of 1998, we would invite members of the Quesada and Tellería families to participate in a round-table on memories of the postslavery period.

That round-table, during which Caridad Quesada burst into song, was a turning point. The quest for evidence now seemed to belong to the Quesadas and Tellerías as well as the historians. Moreover, one member of the audience invited us to meet his grandfather, Tomás Pérez y Pérez, age ninety-six, who had worked all his life on Soledad. Tomás Pérez, it turned out, had known Ciriaco Quesada, the protagonist in the 1899 battle over the mule. "He was a tall man, quite thin." The microhistory of Santa Rosalía began to take on weight and volume.

The methodology that emerged was a pragmatic and improvised one. Because our research was based in a local archive whose director knew half the town – and the other half knew him – personal recollections and documentary evidence tumbled over each other every day. Caridad Quesada spoke to us about her uncle Cayetano Quesada, born to a slave mother on Santa Rosalía. His veteran's pension record was there in the archive, and we could double-check birth dates and the service record, verify residence, and have the material for new questions. We followed these clues out into the countryside, walking the trail that Ciriaco Quesada had ridden the day of the show-down over the mule – and finding the house where Cayetano Quesada's daughter, Ramona Quesada de Castillo, still lives. She, in turn, talked about her father. We learned that Cayetano and Ciriaco Quesada had lived side by side on a plot of land in the hamlet of San Antón. Her brother Humberto Quesada, who still cultivates that *sitio*, showed us the avocado tree that their grandfather Alejandro had apparently planted after the family achieved full legal freedom from slavery, and moved to settle a few miles away from the Santa Rosalía plantation.

Oral history, of course, has some awkwardnesses that archival research does not. One morning when I reached the archive, Félix Tellería's father, Fermín, was waiting. He had some family papers in his shirt pocket, and he had come to speak with me about his father Trino Tellería, also a veteran of the 1895-98 war. We had already located Trino Tellería's pension record in the archive, so I read it aloud to Fermín – and faced the embarrassing moment when I realized that the pension request had been filed in 1937 by Fermín's sister, Nazaria, who in the course of her petition had sworn that she had no brothers or sisters. Fermín Tellería looked more or less bemused by this implied denial of his existence,

and I learned a quick lesson about the misleading formalisms that sometimes undergird seemingly rigorous written documentation.¹⁷

In sum, the rough-and-ready technique of sharing written records orally, and of recording oral testimony in writing, made possible a dialogue between types of sources that seemed to accelerate the research process exponentially. But what of our early questions about Afro-Cuban participation in the 1895-98 war? On the one hand, it seemed to be everywhere – we had found an abundance of grandparents, parents, and uncles who had been veterans. On the other hand, its linkage to slavery now appeared to have a twist. Often the black veterans who had survived in memory were not precisely former slaves. As we traced the genealogies, and linked names to slave lists, we found that a common pattern was for the soldier to be the freeborn son of a slave mother, or of parents held under the *patronato*, the notional “apprenticeship” that was imposed on most slaves at the time of formal abolition in 1880. In other words, the process of gradual emancipation in Cuba had, by freeing children beginning with those born in 1868, but retaining working-age adults in bondage into the 1880s, created a very particular category of young man: one whose own legal status was that of nominal freedom, but who had grown up largely within the world of slavery to which his mother, and often his father, still belonged.

Here was part of the answer to the puzzle posed by Michael Zeuske’s early findings. It may well be that former slaves from the largest sugar plantations in Cienfuegos – those whom he identified through their possession of classic “slave surnames” like Zulueta, Terry, and Moré – were in fact relatively rare among the recruits to the rebel army. The most productive plantations, owned by the wealthiest entrepreneurs, were fortified to prevent both rebel incursions and rebel recruitment. Moreover, the great majority of their former slaves were by 1895 well over the age of thirty, with many over forty or over fifty. But at the edges and in the interstices of the sugar zones, and in the mid-sized plantations like Santa Rosalía, much less fortified, there were former slaves in their thirties, like Ciriaco Quesada, who joined forces with co-workers to form the rebel bands that emerged early in the war. There were also *muchachones*,

17. Pensión interesada por Nazaria Tellería, como hija del veterano Sr. Trino Tellería Santana, Año de 1937, in Fondo Juzgado de Primera Instancia de Cienfuegos, APC. Trino Tellería had in 1929 formally recognized his paternity of Nazaria Tellería, born in 1901. She first asserted in her 1937 pension request that her father had never been married, and hence had left no other legitimate or recognized children. Later in the document she swore that he had left no other natural or legitimate children. This was misleading, since the children of even an unrecognized union were *hijos naturales* (natural children) if the parents had been in a condition to marry at the time of the birth – i.e. if the union was not adulterous, bigamous, etc. (Fermín Tellería’s birth – to the same father and mother – had probably been recorded in the town of Camarones rather than in Cienfuegos.)

young men in their teens or early twenties, born free, who were responsive to appeals to join the rebellion in the summer and fall of 1895.¹⁸

Caridad Quesada's uncle Cayetano Quesada was just such a *muchachón*, born free to a slave mother, and he joined at the age of seventeen. With Cayetano Quesada's trajectory in mind, Michael Zeuske went back to a sample of thirty-seven well-documented requests for back pay filed by the surviving families of black and mulatto rebel soldiers killed during the war. Sure enough, the free sons of slave mothers emerged as an important group among these soldiers, recruited alongside a smaller number of men who were themselves born into slavery, and another group born to long-free families of color.¹⁹

In conjunction with Zeuske and García's statistical data, the life histories built up through this encounter of documents and memories suggest a new way of thinking about the question of black and mulatto participation in the war. Rather than envisioning a diffuse and continuous set of "struggles" for freedom – in which the fight for personal freedom leads naturally to participation in the fight for national freedom – we can try to locate the recruits themselves in the precise social fields in which they operated. We can situate them within families, and gain some sense of the accounts they might have wished to settle with the state that had sanctioned slavery, and in some cases with the individuals who had held their parents in bondage. We can explore whether their relative youth and physical mobility brought them in contact with revolutionary activists, and whether plantation work groups served as nuclei for rebel bands.

Tracing the process of recruitment in this way provides no magic key to motivation – a target that always seems elusive, no matter how carefully one refines one's methodology. But assembling such life histories and situating them within the history of these plantations can provide a sense of the social composition and work experience of the small groups who came together before and during the war. These "bands," often operating under highly personalized leadership, took to the woods around Soledad plantation in 1895, stealing horses and torching cane and settling grudges – and furthering the cause of Cuban independence, indirectly or directly. Later they would be constituted as formal companies of the Cienfuegos Brigade.

These groups seem to have emerged from the war as clusters of individuals bound by mutual loyalties and shared antagonisms – and undoubtedly divided by some rivalries. Armed, mounted, and quite sure of their own strength, they were quick to contest attempts to place limits on their freedom and citizenship. They could join forces, for example, to help one of their number keep a horse acquired during the war by testifying on his behalf at the property registry to the

18. The general dynamic of recruitment in the region is discussed in Scott 2001 and García Martínez 2001.

19. See Zeuske 2000: this paper will be published in the forthcoming conference proceedings, edited by José Amador, Fernando Coronil & Pablo Pacheco.

legitimacy of his claim, enabling him to acquire title under procedures set up by the U.S. occupation government. And in the case of Ciriaco Quesada, they could back up his claim to recover a mule once the war was over – a mule that the administrator at Santa Rosalía certainly did not want to turn over to the Quesada family.²⁰

By looking closely at these small groups and their members one can see the storied “cross-racial” alliances as very concrete things, while at the same time glimpsing some of the fracture lines within them, lines that could widen with time. The same comrades who might stand together at the property register in Arimao could be wedged apart by the scheme of racial privilege that governed employment on Soledad plantation.²¹ They could then be united again in the electoral alliances, particularly of the Liberal Party, that were made possible by the 1901 Constitution and its guarantee of universal manhood suffrage.

Tracing individuals one by one, we also learn some of the subtle markers of race and status, coded references that at first appeared to be mere formalities. Revolutionary record-keepers had emphasized the equality of Cuban citizenship by refusing to add the old colonial racial labels – *pardo*, *mulato*, *moreno*, *negro* – to the names of recruits as they drew up enlistment registers. Moreover, they often avoided further invidious distinctions by eschewing the use of doubled surnames, the classic Iberian signal of legitimate descent.²² But this formal egalitarianism could be undercut elsewhere by the conventions of notaries who drew attention to – or even imposed – distinctions in naming patterns that encoded status, and perhaps color, less explicitly. Thus in Nazaria Tellería’s pension request she was listed as Nazaria Tellería *s.o.a.* – *sin otro apellido*, without another surname. Ordinarily using a single surname signaled illegitimacy, as the child born outside marriage could claim the mother’s surname but not a paternal surname.²³ For Nazaria Tellería, how-

20. On the right to register horses and the claim for the mule, see Scott 2001.

21. The question of racial segregation on Soledad estate has become clearer as the correspondence of the owner and administrator has come to light. See the correspondence of Edwin F. Atkins in the Atkins Family Papers, Massachusetts Historical Society, and an initial discussion in Scott 1998:701.

22. See, for example, the enlistment register for the third company of the first battalion of the Regimiento de Infantería “Cienfuegos,” in Expediente 60, Inventario 1, Documentos relativos a la inspección general del Ejército ... 27 de Noviembre de 1896, Colección de documentos del Ejército Libertador, Archivo Provincial de Villa Clara, Santa Clara, Cuba. In this list the ex-slave soldier Ciriaco Quesada is listed with a single surname, as are all the other soldiers and officers in the company.

23. On the rules governing the use of surnames, see Pérez Lobo 1944, Articles 119-141 of the 1889 Civil Code. The stigma associated with the single surname is suggested by the 1927 ruling that gave even “natural children” the right to use a double surname: “In the inscribing of natural children there shall appear in conjunction with the first case of this Article, the complete paternal and maternal surname[s] of the person recognizing [parentage of] the child, in order that, being used in this way by these children, they will not publicly manifest the illegitimacy of their origins.” (Resol. Secr. Justicia 15 Jul. 1927, p. 47).

ever, this was clearly not the case – she had been recognized by her father and she used his name. The gratuitous placing of the three-letter initial *s.o.a.* after her name may well have been linked to a detail that was mentioned explicitly elsewhere in the document: that she and her father were categorized as *mes-tizo*, the common Cuban term often used as a genteel label for those who had earlier been denominated *pardo* or *mulato*. The republican notaries had quietly adapted a label from the late colonial era, *s.o.a.*, using it to call attention to the social status of those who now appeared before them as Cuban citizens.²⁴

CONCLUSION

Studying the racial fault lines of a society that has tended to deny them is often a thankless task. Moreover, and ironically, one runs the risk of over-insisting on the salience of race, precisely because the history of denial is so strong. By focusing on a single locality, the three of us, in conjunction with other colleagues, have pieced together one strategy for working on and around this problem. For the relatively small number of individuals whose genealogy or social circumstances we can trace in detail, we are able to examine directly the situation of descendants of slaves in central Cuba, without relying on intervening “markers” of slave ancestry that may or may not appear in a given body of documentation. Independent of whether Cayetano Quesada is referred to by a color label in a particular written record, we know that his parents were slaves on the Ingenio Santa Rosalía. His recruitment to the Liberation Army during its first months thus stands as a direct instance of a young man born free into the world of slavery who chose the path of insurgency. His life history, in conjunction with those of his neighbors Ciriaco Quesada, Claudio Sarría, Rafael Iznaga, and others, may help illuminate the process by which such men made similar choices (see Scott 2000b). At the same time, the life history of his neighbor Ramos Quesada, who remained on the Santa Rosalía plantation during the war to guard the cattle against rebel incursions, may illustrate another sort of choice.²⁵

Continuing the story beyond 1898, through the U.S. occupation and into the first years of the republic, it becomes possible to make progress in examining the multiple legacies of the rebellion. We seldom know for certain what

24. The question of “race-marking” in late colonial and republican Cuba is a complex one, and these observations on the use of *s.o.a.* are quite preliminary (see Zeuske 2002).

25. On Ramos Quesada, see the correspondence to and from Santa Rosalía that is held in the Colección Manuscrita Julio Lobo, Biblioteca Nacional José Martí, Havana; and Sartorius (2001). The forthcoming doctoral dissertation by Sartorius examines the phenomenon of loyalty to the Spanish state on the part of some Cubans of color.

soldiers' thoughts and motivations were, yet traces have been left in the way in which Cuban veterans established claims to property and citizenship after the war. Their assertions of entitlement as patriots, alongside their often complex negotiations within the entangling webs of an emerging system of clientelism, begin to speak for them.²⁶

In this particular provincial archive, as in other local archives in Cuba, the key records are located not in careful seclusion, but in a building whose door opens, both literally and figuratively, onto the street. The Quesada, Pérez, and Tellería kin did not hesitate to bring additional documents and photographs to the project, taking various initiatives, commenting on our preliminary findings, and suggesting interpretations, almost from the beginning. Questions of race in Cuba and elsewhere are delicate, but we have found that they need not be unspeakable. The "social construction of race" is an ongoing process that people can and do talk about, not just a now-fashionable analytic label. Tomás Pérez y Pérez, son of an ex-slave mother and a Spanish immigrant father, knew very well that the racial labels attributed to him varied according to context, and he was willing to reflect aloud on the ways this affected his employment and the social situation of his family. Ramona Quesada has also thought about her father's and her own "blackness" as descendants of the slaves on Santa Rosalía – as well as her husband Evelio's "whiteness" as a descendant of Canary Islanders. The "social construction of race" is an often brutal process, and these life histories help to illuminate its unfolding in a notionally race-blind republic.²⁷

Here lies the unanticipated benefit: precisely because we have been able to trace slave ancestry with relative precision, we need not assume and impute a fixed meaning to that ancestry. And because we need to explain our findings along the way to those who knew many of the people we are writing about, we are particularly open to challenge and clarification. By anchoring our hypotheses in an ever-widening and ramifying set of life histories, we can, if appropriate, let go of the revisionist zeal to insist on the primacy of racial discrimination at the same time that we relinquish the heroic picture of revolutionary unity. The resulting stories become more complex, taking shape both within the historiography as it is now emerging, and within the community of Cienfuegos itself.

But what of the national narrative? Did we, like good *fin-de-siècle* students of the subaltern, overturn the national narrative?

I suppose not quite. Instead, we have expanded our sense of the elements that have to be accounted for in any such narrative. The construction and interpretation of these life histories and collective biographies might be seen

26. On this point, see Scott & Zeuske 2002.

27. For a vivid picture of an equally complex process on the shifting terrain of the border states and upper south in the United States, see Murray 1956.

as an attempt to fulfill the goal set out by Arlette Farge in her work on the historian in the archive. In her text, Farge implicitly recalls the romantic conviction expressed by Jules Michelet that the historian can exhume and restore life to the dead through work in the dust of the archive.²⁸ Gently rebuking such a presumption, Farge (1989:145) suggests a more open-ended, and ultimately collaborative, picture:

One does not bring back to life those whom we find cast up in the archive. But that is no reason to make them suffer a second death. The space is narrow within which to develop a story that will neither cancel out nor dissolve these lives, that will leave them available so that one day, and elsewhere, another narrative may be built from their enigmatic presence.

28. Michelet (1982:268) wrote: "I have given to many of the dead the assistance which I will be needing. I exhumed them for a second life ..." (1982:268). The reference to his own future need for exhumation becomes clearer in the light of an earlier draft, cited in the editors' note 4: "I will soon die and I, with my long works, will be a memory, a fact of the nineteenth century, whose history I write." See also Steedman 1998.

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HIDDEN MARKERS, OPEN SECRETS: ON NAMING,
RACE-MARKING, AND RACE-MAKING IN CUBA

In general, all records are secret.
(Ruiz Gomez 1874:xxii)

THINKING ABOUT SLAVERY AND RACE IN
ATLANTIC HISTORY

In one of his recent articles Thomas C. Holt (1995:7) writes: "the everyday acts of name calling and petty exclusions are minor links in a larger historical chain of events, structures, and transformations anchored in slavery and the slave trade." At the start of this chain, at the very beginning of race-marking in American slave societies, particularly in Cuba, there are many signs of and ideas about slavery and race. There is also a wave of new works about the idea of race in the Americas and in world history.¹ But what are the real beginnings of race-marking and race-making in a society other than that of the much-studied United States?²

There are generally – as I see it, and somewhat hypothetically – three main stages of race-marking in the "big picture" of slavery (Davis 2000).³ The first general stage stretches from 1440 to 1650. It reaches from the

1. Wright 1990; Winant 1994; Hannaford 1996; Wade 1997; Naranjo Orovio & Puig-Samper 1998:12-13.

2. All quotations have been translated from Spanish to English by Ulrike Bock. I wish to acknowledge my appreciation to Rebecca J. Scott (University of Michigan) and Hanneke Teunissen (KITLV Leiden) for their close readings and valuable criticisms, to Matias Röhrig Assunção (University of Essex) and Javier Laviña (University of Barcelona) for their suggestions based on the reading of an earlier draft of this paper. I would also like to thank Orlando García Martínez (Archivo Provincial de Cienfuegos), Fernando Martínez Heredia (Centro Juan Marinello, Havana), and Esther Pérez Pérez (Centro Martin Luther King, Havana). All citations maintain the orthography of the original.

3. A strong counter-position to my view of slavery and racism can be found in Sweet 1997.

initial links between slavery and blackness,⁴ the very beginnings of the Atlantic slave trade in the 1440s, and the first nuclei of mixed slavery in the Atlantic islands to the emergence of Africans as rural slaves in the Americas. The point of no return in the relationship between “African” ethnicity, slavery as a labor system, and constructed blackness seems to have come in the English, Dutch, and Danish Caribbean at the end of the first half of the sixteenth century; eighty years earlier in Brazil; and somewhat later in North America, the French Caribbean, and the Spanish Caribbean.

The second general stage reaches from the end of this period to the end of slavery, through the first wave of abolition after the revolution in Saint Domingue, British emancipation, and the end of slavery in the various new Latin American republics (ca. 1650 to ca. 1850). An overlapping third stage of expanding slavery begins with the Haitian Revolution and lasts until the last New World abolitions in the southern United States in 1865, Cuba in 1886, and Brazil in 1888.

Upon closer examination, it is clear that slavery itself, and above all, the so-called “second slavery” (Tomich 1988, 1990, 1991) in the third period, in daily, face-to-face relations on and near the plantations, does not necessarily need extensive race-marking. Slaves were brought to the Americas to perform labor, and the work they did marked them (Berlin 1998:1-14; Zeuske 2002c). Working in the fields in crop production, they could be readily discerned as bound residents of the plantations. Moreover, after between one to three hundred years of African enslavement in the main American sugar, cocoa, and rice-producing regions, slavery was mostly by definition a question of race. In most of the plantation zones until the end of slavery, the class of field workers was overwhelmingly black. Therefore, the work they did was “black.” In the main “second slavery” regions, like the U.S. South, Brazil, and Cuba in the nineteenth century, there was always the danger that members of the colored populations be identified as “blacks” with the status of a slave (Röhrig Assunção & Zeuske 1998).⁵

Cuba in the nineteenth century is one of the three great examples of modernization in slavery (together with Brazil and the southern United States). After about one hundred years of slavery in the Cuba of large plantations, sugar production, and mass slavery, in the zone that Juan Pérez de la Riva (1997) called Cuba’s “A-region,” the field slaves formed what was widely referred to as the *clase negra*.

Francisco de Arango y Parreño, the great Cuban economist of slavery and friend of Alexander von Humboldt (Zeuske 2000a, 2001a), demanded

4. Consider the *scavus nigrus* in Sicily in 1430, which, in this culture and at that time, meant “black Slav” (Verlinden 1942, 1977:999-1010; Phillips 1989:85; Heers 1995).

5. On race markers in studies which use the same types of sources, see Rosal 1996; Naveda Chávez-Hita 2001.

clearly, at the very beginnings of mass slavery in Cuba, the economic integration but political exclusion of this *clase negra*. In 1811, he also demanded that they and their descendants be kept from integrating socially, and even culturally, forever:

the cultured nations persist in their opinion that for political advantages the liberated *bozal* as well as the lively *cuarterón* should be considered as equal even though he might be the son or grandson of very commendable people – the concept of one drop of Negro blood infecting the white [blood] to the most remote member even if our senses and our memory do not discover it, we must recall the testimonial of the dead kept in tradition or parchment covered with dust – it seems to be obvious that with the exclusion of any identification with us, the doors to civil liberties should also be closed. (Arango y Parreño 1973:230f)

Arango marked the economic group of field slaves as *negra* and tried to keep their descendants in the cultural prison of socially stigmatized blackness by invoking the notion of a stain that would infect the offspring through the generations. The liberal constitution of Cádiz of 1812 accepted the demands of Arango (not without mighty pressures from the planters of Havana and of the Captain General of Cuba). The constitution did not give voting rights to the *castas pardas* (colored castes).⁶ This ideological position was strongly different from the paternal position of Nicolás Joseph de Ribera, some fifty years earlier: "It matters very little to the state whether the inhabitants of Cuba are whites or blacks, as long as they are working hard to stay loyal to it" (Ribera 1973:165).

There were very small differences between individual members of this *clase negra*, especially in the eyes of the surrounding society and the masters themselves, and these differences resulted from the individual's origin: *esclavo bozal* or *esclavo criollo*, "born in Africa" or "born in Cuba," and *esclavo moreno* or *esclavo pardo*, "black slave" or "mulatto slave." Nevertheless, there was a hierarchy within the slave *dotación* (community of slaves on one plantation), about which we have very little knowledge (García 1996:7-40). For Cuban slave society in general, they were simply *los esclavos negros*, as Fernando Ortiz's famous title reads (1906, 1916; Knight 1970). Therefore, visible and readable race-marking and race-making in the times of slavery in Cuba had their greatest significance not for slaves, but for *libertos*, the various groups of *morenos* and *pardos libres* (Deschamps Chapeaux & Pérez de la Riva 1974; Röhrig Assunção & Zeuske 1998), and the free men

6. Open race and color measures, like the exclusion of the *castas pardas* in Spanish Cuba, for example, served as an example to form a body of constitutional criteria for the Spanish empire that restricted citizenship for these *castas pardas* in the first liberal constitution (Cádiz 1812); see Fradera 1999:51-69; for aftereffects relating to the Spanish-American movements and wars of independence 1812-30, see Múnera:173-215.

– and women – of color in urban spaces (Martínez-Alier 1974; Heumann 1981; Stolcke 1992).

In seeking the beginnings of new forms of race-marking and race-making in Cuban society *without* slavery at the end of the nineteenth century and at the beginning of postemancipation society, one finds first the process by which the old markers from the times of slavery are extinguished, both on the part of the Spanish colonial state (with the extension of limited civil rights, Scott 1985:274-75; Hevia Lanier 1996; Zeuske & Zeuske 1998:399-400) and within the Cuban nationalist movement. The nationalist variant of equal rights clearly contained a much stronger set of egalitarian claims under the rubric of race-blindness. As several authors have recently noted, this concept served both to open and, at times, to close possibilities for antiracist policies and practices (Helg 1995; Ferrer 1998:228-49, 1999a, 1999b).

On the level of the nation, there is relatively little open race-marking during the conflict over national independence, aside from Spanish war propaganda and the nationalists' private and semi-official texts, and the ideology of color-blindness militated strongly against the color terms being recorded in official documents. But in the realm of ideas, interspersed with ideas about race,⁷ ideologies of race-blindness and the celebration of *mestizaje*, it is certain that notions of race permeated nationalist thinking. My focus here, however, is on the daily practices of race-marking, and to discern these, I will shift the focus away from both practice and ideology on the national level to microhistory. With research on the local level and into microhistory, complemented by the more actor-centered *life histories*, it is possible to find the very beginnings of the postemancipation variant of race-marking and race-making (Zeuske 2002; Scott 2003 forthcoming).

NAMING: SURNAMES, ABSENT SURNAMES, AND *SIN OTRO* *APELLIDO* AS RACE MARKERS

While reading through judicial and notarial sources⁸ from the early twentieth century, I was puzzled to find many names recorded with the little addendum *s.o.a.* or *s.s.a.*, abbreviations for *sin otro apellido* (without any other surname) or *sin segundo apellido* (without second surname) (Zeuske 2001b). This "marker," in Cuba, turns out to be crucial to any approach for studying race that uses life histories as a basis.

7. Pruna & García González 1989; Naranjo Orovio & García González 1996; Naranjo Orovio & Puig-Samper 1998; García González 1999; Fuente 2001.

8. Other uses of this type of source can be found in the analysis of manumission. See Díaz Díaz 1996; Harth-Terre 1973; Schwartz 1974; Johnson 1979; Aguirre 1992.

What exactly does marking – to use Holt’s term again – people in documents with this addendum, *s.o.a.*, mean? What does that addendum mark: a low social status or, specifically, the status of former slave? Does it indicate illegitimacy (Ortmayr 1996)? Does it denote a low social status shared by former slaves and free, poor whites, or does it mean, specifically and only, race? Does it imply both, a combination of, or all of these things?

The meaning of this marker may, in fact, have its roots in the marker used to indicate slave and African descent. It may also have been used to indicate legal status. Legal status was transmitted through the female line and is recognizable in the use of only the mother’s surname for slave-children.⁹ In fact, one of the prime indicators of slave or semi-slave status has long been the use of the mother’s surname or the absence of a surname altogether. In the days of slavery in Cuba, and also in the first years of postemancipation society, young men and women with a close relationship to slavery were often presented as the *hijo de* (son of) or *hija de* (daughter of), followed by the first name of the mother: María, Bárbara, Francisca, or a similar name. Naming a person in such a way represented a continuation of the manner in which administrators on plantations registered the labor force, and even after the granting of legal freedom, this manner of referencing was updated only marginally.

To understand how names entered notarial records, it is important to understand the general forms of naming in Castilian Cuban culture. In this culture, everyone with legally married parents has two *apellidos* or two surnames: for example, Juan Martínez García is the son of the couple Pedro Martínez Pérez and María García Jiménez. Juan’s two surnames are composed of his father Pedro’s first surname (*primer apellido*), Martínez – as Juan’s first surname – and his mother María’s first surname, García – as Juan’s second surname (*segundo apellido*). These two surnames, Martínez García, are thus the *apellidos*. In daily interactions, however, Juan Martínez García would often be called only Juan Martínez. To confuse matters further, even women were sometimes known by their second surname in daily life. A woman’s second surname was her mother’s surname, as in Señora Ramos Maceda, known as Maceda or la Señorita D^a Ysabel Martinez y Valdés, known as D^a Ysabel Valdés.¹⁰ But in either legal transactions or official documents which required for legal status to be indicated, the two *apellidos*,

9. As concerns naming and marginalization, I have been influenced by Bering 1987.

10. Archivo Histórico Provincial de Villa Clara (AHPVC), Protocolos Calixto María Casals y Valdés, Sagua la Grande, 1886, t. 2, fols. 716r-718r, escritura no. 177 “Venta de finca urbana,” Sagua, July 5, 1886.

as the official form of the name, were used as a sign of full juridical personality and legitimate birth.¹¹

The rules for using surnames in Cuba were formalized in the 1889 Spanish Civil Code, carried over into independent Cuba, and modified only twice, once in 1927 and once in the 1940 constitution (Pérez Lobo 1944:46-49).¹² A notary was prohibited from attributing a father's surname to a child born out of wedlock, unless the father had recognized the child legally (Pérez Lobo 1944:46).

But some male former slaves and Chinese laborers – all men of low social status and with the main goal of elevating the social status of their children – had already tried to resolve this problem by the 1880s, with the juridical instrument of *reconocimiento de hijo natural*. This judicial step produced notarial records with a clause explicitly giving the children the possibility of using the father's and the mother's *apellidos*, meaning that they could use two surnames. However, in daily life, only the mother's name would appear behind the child's Christian name.

WHO ARE THOSE "WITHOUT OTHER SURNAME?"

During my research, I noted first that naming, that is to say, the process of giving civil names to former slaves by adopting one surname of the last, or one of the last, owner's families, was widespread in the period around 1886. In contrast, notarial records from the 1870s often show only the given name of the slave (from the rich source of Biblical names) with the color term

11. As regards foreigners with high social status who did not use the second surname in the Castilian Cuban manner, the notaries, in the years near the end of slavery, began to note explicitly that some of them voluntarily relinquished the use of the mother's *apellido* and that some others did not. For example: "appeared on the one hand Mr. James Mac-Lean, without second surname for not using one, citizen of the municipal capital [*término municipal*] Macagua, married, adult and administrator of the *ingenio* Occitania, and on the other hand Don Juan Mac-Cullock y Marshall, citizen of the municipal capital Amaro, single, adult and administrator of the *ingenio* Unidad" (AVHPC, Protocolos Calixto María Casals y Valdés, Sagua la Grande, 1886, t. 2, fols. 833r-858r, escritura no. 217 "Recibo y cancelacion parcial de hipoteca," Sagua la Grande, August 10, 1886).

12. Article 134, chapter IV, "De los hijos ilegítimos" states: "The acknowledged illegitimate son has the right: First to bear the surname of the one who acknowledged him." In 1927, this was modified: "In the registration of illegitimate sons is stated – in accordance with the principle of the first section of this art. – *the complete paternal and maternal surname of the person who acknowledges him* thus preventing the aforesaid sons from revealing ostensibly the illegitimacy of their origin (Resolut. Dep. of Justice, July 15, 1927). See art. 44 Const." About the modifications in the constitution of 1940, see also Álvarez Tabio 1941.

moreno/a or *pardo/a* in front of it, often linked to a cultural, ethnic, or corporal marker after it, like *criollo/a* (creole), *congo/a*, *lucumí*, or *delgado* (thin), always written in lowercase letters. This demonstrates that the terms were open markers, not names. For freemen or -women, the standard term had, for centuries, been the racially marked *moreno libre*, *morena libre* (free black), or *parda*, *pardo libre* (free brown). The abolition of slavery in October of 1886 caused the disappearance of the political marker *libre* in the records, since all were now free. Under the *patronato* (1880-86), the new markers *sin segundo apellido*, or *sin más apellido*, and *sin otro apellido* first began to appear. The last has gradually been more generally used since the beginning of the twentieth century.

To examine these patterns, I first reviewed some 15,000 notarial records and inheritance cases concerning veterans from the 1895-98 war. The records were from the Lajas-Cruces region in the Cienfuegos hinterland, and the cases dated from 1903 to 1905. Thereafter I perused some two thousand notarial records from Cienfuegos and Sagua la Grande, two main sugar regions in Cuba at the end of the nineteenth century, from San Juan de Remedios, a region with few slaves, and from Santiago de Cuba, a town with many slaves and many freedmen from the earlier years of 1870 to 1890.

Naming practices were, in many instances, the only indications by which to recognize former slaves in the late years of slavery, during the process of gradual emancipation, and in the early years of postemancipation. These were also the last years of Spanish colonial rule in Cuba. But in the first twenty-five years of the young Cuban republic, the question of naming practices shifted, as the resolution of the secretary of justice and the constitution of 1940 show.

From the actors themselves we have only the individual voices of those who moved into urban areas and learned to write, like Ricardo Batrell (1921) and José Isabel Herrera (1948) or, to be used with even greater caution, the "memories from the future," such as the life histories of Esteban Montejo (Barnet 1967) and Reyita, or María de los Reyes Castillo Bueno, 1902-97 (Rubiera Castillo 1997).¹³

In biographies of members of the Cuban workers' movement, we also find hidden histories of shame about and rebellion against the social degradation of illegitimacy (Cabrera 1985:7-10). But the majority of former slaves remained in the countryside and left no such narrative life histories. Notarial records thus provide an unequaled glimpse into their lives.

The entire process of naming in Cuba was a very complicated one, being situated between choice and imposition. Reyita's memoir represents one of the few written examples of how experience with the insurgents could give rise to a heightened sense of right to a surname and to a claim to have one's

13. Ibarra Cuesta 1994; Zeuske 2000b.

choice recognized (Rubiera Castillo 1997:18, n. 173).¹⁴ In some instances, I have the impression that the sons of slave mothers who were given slave surnames were “playing” with the surnames. This seems to be a logical conclusion, given that the question of naming was always linked to problems with the status of an unmarried mother. The official baptismal record, for example, reads *padre no conocido* (father not known). But in most cases, the identity of the father is well known. Therefore, the words *conocido por* (known as) often appear in the documents, as in these examples: “Estanislao Alvarez, known as Blanco;”¹⁵ or “D^a Vicenta Armenteros, without second surname, citizen of Lajas, native of Africa, single, adult, manages her own household [*trabajo casa*], grants power to D. Eduardo Guzmán to obtain from the Treasury Department (Secretaria de Hacienda) the certificate of the funds that had been paid to her illegitimate son Don Juan Moré, known as Armenteros, killed as a soldier of the Cuban Liberation Army;”¹⁶ and one well-known man, “Ricardo Batrell, known as Ricardo Oviedo” (Martínez Heredia 2001:300, n. 10). Another example from an urban setting is that of the worker Alfredo López, born of an extramarital relationship between the Spaniard Luis Felipe López and the *mestiza* Julia Arencibia. López always used his father’s surname, though officially the identity of his father was *no conocido* (unknown) (Cabrera 1985:7-10).

When, in 1902, the year of the founding of the republic, on the outskirts of Santa Clara, a new citizen appeared before a notary, the writer made reference to various competing elements that composed his new name: color, “civic” master’s surname, explicitly “without other surname,” “known as,” and African descent. “In the town of Calabazar ... [appears] on the one hand the *moreno* Luis Rodriguez without other surname, native of Africa, generally known as Luis Lucumí, citizen of this neighborhood, single, eighty years of age and landowner.”¹⁷

The use of the master’s name as “slave name,” in some cases, may not have had its roots in the identity of a young man. The group we know best is are the so-called *muchachones*, young men born between 1868 and 1880 (the generation of emancipation), who fought in the anticolonial war of 1895-98,

14. We also know relatively little about the relationship between individual naming as a mass process, and the social categories *campesino*, “rural proletariat,” *agricultor*, *de profesión campo*, *jornalero*, and more complicated yet, the multifaceted term *guajiro*. For Puerto Rico see Scarano 1999; see also Arrom 1980; Carr 1998; Naranjo Orovio 2001.

15. Archivo Provincial de Cienfuegos (APC), leg. 14, exp. 654, no. 845 (1904).

16. APC, Protocolos Domingo Valdés Losada, Cruces, t. 13 (Agosto/Septiembre 1904), escritura no. 943 “Poder,” fols. 3004r-3005r.

17. APHVC, Protocolos Eduardo Domínguez Consuegra, t. 2, 1902 (Marzo 29-Diciembre 29, 1902), Término Municipal de Calabazar partido judicial de la ciudad de Santa Clara, no. 96, “Venta de finca urbana,” Calabazar, December 12, 1902, fols. 427r-475r. Luis does not know how to sign.

and obtained the status of *mambises* and later, *libertadores*, or veterans (Zeuske 2001b:207-8). They developed enough self-confidence and status, perhaps, to refer explicitly to their notionally unknown father. But it is also possible that many men did so because the people in their little town, who knew them very well, called them by the surname of the man who was officially only a *padre desconocido* (unknown father). This was the situation in the following example from 1904, when many relatives, so that they might claim an inheritance, had to explain the various surnames (or nicknames) that a deceased veteran had used:

The investigations carried out by Dona Eusebia de la Caridad Perez ["*parda* Eusebia de la Caridad Perez without other surname"], in this Court of Assizes [Juzgado de primera Instancia] in order to prove that her brother Don Juan Ysabel Perez is the same who figured as Juan Ysabel Serrano Perez in the lists of the Liberation Army [Annex: "To the Court of Assizes"] Eusebia de la Caridad Perez ... states ... her named brother was known as Juan Ysabel Serrano y Perez ... Under that name he was known, for everyone in the place knew that even without being acknowledged he was the son of Dn Bonifacio Serrano.¹⁸

The brother and sister in question had legal right to the name Pérez only – it was presumably their mother's name, or that of a previous owner – but the deceased soldier brother had also laid claim to Serrano, the name of his father, "known in the neighborhood," but never recognized before the law.

Reading some of the few surviving wills of former slaves, it also seems there was a type of cultural resistance to the use of *conocido por* (known as), because the bearers may have chosen the surname they preferred, even if, officially, a former slave was to take the first surname of the last master. At the same time, in official transcripts, some were trying to introduce their own oral and unwritten (male) genealogy. This genealogy was to act as a counter-weight to the overwhelming pressures of the Castilian genealogies with two surnames. Thus, we read in the *testamento* (will) of "*moreno* Elias Mena known as Elias Ribalta," who declared in 1888 "that he did not know his parents nor what their names were when he arrived from Africa. For this reason he uses and has used the surname of his first owners and thus he does not know whether they [his parents] are dead or alive."¹⁹ Elias and his companion Josefa were slaves of Tomás Ribalta, also the first master of the better-known

18. APHVC, Protocolos Pelayo Garcia y Santiago, t. 4, 1904 (April 1904), no. 487, "Protocolación," Santa Clara, April 17, 1904, fols. 2200r-2203v. Eusebia does not know how to sign.

19. APHVC, Protocolos Calixto María Casals y Valdés, Sagua la Grande, 1888, t. 2 (Julio-Dic.), fols. 1476r-1477v, escritura no. 365 "Testamento," Sagua la Grande, October 26, 1888.

Esteban Montejo, and like him, they were sometimes known as Mena (or Mera) (Zeuske 1997b, 1999b).

With an even stronger sense of cultural resistance, and of his African roots, Antonio Pérez declared in 1885 that Julio Domingo was his *hijo natural* (natural son):

The *moreno* Antonio Pérez, without second surname, native of the town of Yisá, of the Lucumí nation in Africa, single, fifty-one years of age, field worker and from this place, ... the neighborhood Pueblo Nuevo ... says: in consequence of the relationship which he had with one of his class, *morena libre* Regina Pared, native and citizen of this city, single, adult and already deceased, the latter gave birth the twentieth of December in eighteen-hundred seventy-eight [1878] to a child that is her son and that of an unknown father and was baptized ... with the name of Julio Domingo the thirtieth of the following month of January [1879] specifying that his grandmother was Ascension Pared of the same origin ... Concerning this child, the *moreno* Antonio Perez ... arranges [for it]: that he declares and acknowledges as his illegitimate son the named Julio Domingo ... who therefore gains the right to alimony and education and to follow him as his heir before the law ... empowering him to use his surname [the boy could use two surnames, thus Julio Domingo Pérez Pared]; wishing to record for the proposed opportunity that the grandparents of the acknowledged child were Yícocun Hova and Fá Chipe, both native of the aforementioned town of Yisá and already deceased, and that the person appearing was baptized about the year eighteen-hundred and fifty [at the age of 16] in the parish church of the hamlet of Guaracabuya, as belonging to the *dotación* of the stockyard [*portrero*] called "El Platanal."²⁰

Here, in effect, an African-born father introduces into the official record not only his recognition of a child born out of wedlock, but also his own birth-place in Africa and the names of his parents – the child's African grandparents – left behind some thirty-five years earlier.

Diana Franco, a former slave woman, was placed in the jail in Sagua la Grande in 1890, because of problems with the Banco Español de la Isla de Cuba. She seems to have played with her name for practical purposes, to disguise herself and perhaps also because of the difficulties with the pronunciation of the English name "Drake": "the *morena* Adriana Dregue, known as Diana Drake, which is her legitimate name, and even as Diana Franco, this being the surname of the last owner of the *ingenio* Jucaro to which *dotación* she belonged in the time when slavery existed."²¹ As was

20. APC, Protocolos José Rafael de Villafuerte y Castellanos, 1885, t. 1 (Enero-Abril), fols. 164r-166v, escritura no. 27 "Acta de reconocimiento de hijo natural por el Meno [Moreno] Antonio Perez," Cienfuegos, February 28, 1885.

21. AHPVC, Protocolos Esteban Tomé y Martínez, Sagua la Grande, 1890, t. 1 (Enero-Agosto), fols. 462r-463v, escritura no. 107 "Poder," Sagua la Grande, June 20, 1890.

usual for the time, she had two given names and three surnames at her disposal each time she identified herself.

In my research, there have been only very few examples of the use of *sin segundo apellido* for white Cubans, for example: "Appeared ... Dn Desiderio Valdes, without other surname, native and citizen of this municipal capital, single, twenty-six years of age and employed in agriculture."²² Here, Desiderio's honorific title *don* suggests that he was viewed as "white," and the marker *sin más apellido* shows his status as *hijo natural*. This unusual use of the *sin más apellido* seems to be specific to this documentary source, and to 1890, an ambiguous time, when the title *don* was still confined to whites, but increasingly claimed by Afro-Cuban activists who felt free men of color had a right to it too. In the notarial records, men like the white, poor Cuban, Desiderio Valdés, were recognizable as white because of the title *don*, and probably as poor because of the small size of their land, and the modest amount being paid for it. In one of the following records, Doña Dolores Acosta y Portela names him as the guardian of her minor daughter: "D^a Dolores Acosta y Portela ... with regard to her mentioned daughter D^a Altagracia being a minor, names Dn Desiderio Valdes as her guardian."²³

Another record demonstrates how a white Cuban woman can be an *s.o.a.* through her explicit association with two generations of illegitimacy: "D^a Micaela Alfonso, without second surname, manages own household, twenty-seven years of age, single, native and citizen of this town is the illegitimate daughter of D^a Josefa Alfonso de Armas of the same neighborhood."²⁴ Micaela was the *hija natural* of Josefa Alfonso, who only later became the wife of a man with the surname "Armas." Micaela also has two *hijos naturales*, "with an equally unmarried man and without impediment to marriage" (the note that there was no impediment to marriage was relevant, because it made the children eligible for later *reconocimiento* by the father, according to the terms of the Civil Code of 1889).²⁵ Joining the marker of respectability, *doña*, with *s.o.a.*, the stigma of illegitimacy, in 1890, anticipated a pattern that

22. APHVC, Protocolos Esteban Tomé y Martínez, Sagua la Grande, 1890, t. 1 (Enero-Agosto), fols. 170r-173r, escritura no. 40 "Venta de finca rústica," Sagua la Grande, March 6, 1890. Desiderio knows how to sign, but with difficulty; Dolores Acosta y Portela does not.

23. APHVC, Protocolos Esteban Tomé y Martínez, Sagua la Grande, 1890, t. 1 (Enero-Agosto), fols. 178r-183v, escritura no. 42 "Testamento," Quemado de Güines, March 6, 1890. For a long time, the surname "Valdés" was used in Cuba as a single surname for orphans.

24. APHVC, Protocolos Esteban Tomé y Martínez, Sagua la Grande, 1890, t. 1 (Enero-Agosto), fols. 287r-299r, escritura no. 70, "Testamento," Sagua la Grande, April 9, 1890.

25. APHVC, Protocolos Esteban Tomé y Martínez, Sagua la Grande, 1890, t. 1 (Enero-Agosto), fol. 298r, escritura no. 70, "Testamento," Sagua la Grande, April 9, 1890.

would re-emerge in the later republic to mark women of color entering into property transactions.

OWNERS' SURNAMES – SLAVES' SURNAMES

The single greatest methodological obstacle to research on the situation of former slaves in Cuba has long been the difficulty of tracing them through records that, for a variety of reasons, make no reference to their status of freed people. Researchers face many and long lists of plantations workers', small-town residents', and municipal inhabitants' names, or censuses and electoral lists, etc., but they bear very few indications of color or slave parentage. At the same time, the periods of late slavery and emancipation and the first years of postemancipation society were still dominated by the big structures of sugar centrals (Iglesias 1999). Therefore, we do know the names of the owners. We also know that the slaves, in the process of individual emancipation,²⁶ received the first surname of their last (or in some cases, next-to-last) owner as their own surname. One aid in the search for the invisible ex-slaves is thus the *grandes apellidos esclavos* – major slave surnames, that is, the surnames of large-scale slave-owners used by persons other than these owners.²⁷

Starting with a list of all slaves of the Lajas region in 1875,²⁸ one can see that of a total of 1,852 slaves, there were 1,331 rural slaves (Scott 1985) and the rest were house-slaves or slaves in forms of production other than sugar. These rural slaves were under the control of a group of owners composed of twenty-eight natural persons, three societies of owners, and thirteen slave-hirers (who owned one to five slaves). The owners with the largest plantation workforces were Moré, Goytizolo, Terry, Abreu, Hidalgo, Gándara y Lomba, Villegas, García Mora, Palacios, Mora, Pasalodos, and López del Campillo. After 1886, these surnames were also those of the majority of the formers slaves in the Lajas-Cruces region in central Cuba. By 1875 and according to the same list, the Venezuelan, Terry, had 156 slaves, the Colombian, Conde Moré, had 327 slaves, and the Catalan, Goytizolo, 110 slaves; their numbers were still growing despite the general decline in slavery.

26. With very few exceptions, like the Atkins slaves; see Atkins 1980.

27. The methodology was developed by Zeuske (1997a). We are unable to exclude what might be termed the "slaves-in-the-family-problem" (see Ball 1999). That is, how can one distinguish between those who take the master's name as a sign of previous ownership and those who may take it as a result of unofficial recognition of parentage. This problem is addressed in micro-regional studies, like that of Ball.

28. Archivo Nacional de Cuba (ANC), Havana, Miscelánea de Expedientes, leg. 3748, exp. B, Captianía Pdánea de Santa Isabel de las Lajas, no. 3, "Padrón general de esclavos, 1875."

Thus, the biggest groups of "slave surnames" in this region would logically be Terry, Moré, Goytizolo, and so forth. In the colonial electoral lists of Lajas for 1898,²⁹ there are 1,426 persons who voted (men over the age of 25).³⁰ Of these, 172 had one of the region's "big" slave surnames.³¹ Therefore, using these "big" slave surnames, we had one instrument to search for the otherwise invisible former slaves, and we could identify their partial access to citizenship and the vote in the last years of the colony.

The voices of the former slaves themselves, like that of Faustino Jimenez Favelo of Cienfuegos, also explain the use of slave surnames: "the *moreno* Faustino Jimenez Favelo, formerly known as Miranda, and later as Nimes, after the owners of the *ingenio* to which *dotación* he belonged, called for some time "Caridad de Miranda" and afterwards "Altamira," native of Africa, sixty-four years of age, married, occupation in the countryside." Or consider that of Juana Beronda of Sagua la Grande: "the *morena* Juana Beronda, without second surname, native of Gangá, in Africa, single, eighty years of age and from the countryside ... declares that she is from Africa and that her parents, whom she did not know and whose names she did not remember, died; therefore [she] bears the surname of one of her owners, as it is the custom to do."³²

But when no master is explicitly mentioned, this mode of identifying former slaves remains, by itself, oblique and inferential. Without compiling individual biographies one cannot be absolutely sure of slave ancestry, and it is easy to miss former slaves who assumed some other surname or surnames.

29. "Lista por orden alfabético de apellidos y con numeración correlativa, de todos los vecinos mayores de veinte y cinco años que constan en el censo jeneral de población con expression de la edad, domicilio, profesión y si saben leer y escribir," in APC, Fondo Ayuntamiento de Lajas (FAL), leg. 3, exp. 161, inv. 1 (28 Enero-2 Marzo 1898), "Expediente que contiene lista de vecinos mayores de 25 años que constan en el censo general de población," fols. 2r-26r.

30. APC, FAL, Document without classification or foliation ("lista II 1898"). About electoral legislation, see Torre 1998:82 and Roldán de Montaud 1999.

31. Terry: 41, Mora: 24, Moré: 20, Hidalgo: 18, Madrazo: 15, Cruz: 15, Avilés: 10, Palacios: 8, Barroso: 7, Abreu: 6, Goytizolo: 4, Pasalodos: 4. See, for example, "lista de número de patrocinados por propietario" (Octubre 1883), in APC, FAL, no. 111, leg. 2, exp. 78, inv. 1, fols. 18r-19r.

32. APC, Protocolos Verdaguer 1883, escritura no. 14, "Venta de finca urbana por Da. Lucía Moreira Valero, viuda de Gomez, a favor de las menores morenas Manuela y Francisca Nimes," Cienfuegos, January 15, 1883, fols. 83r - 99r; AHPVC, Protocolos Calixto María Casals y Valdés, Sagua la Grande, 1889 (Enero-Dic.), fols. 1076r-1077v, escritura no. 300 "Testamento," Sagua la Grande, November 22, 1889.

The other limitation is that notarial records reflect only a small percentage of the population. In the future, therefore, we must also examine prisoners' records³³ and court cases, and the use and importance of *s.o.a.* for complainants, defendants, and witnesses.

EXTINGUISHING OLD MARKERS IN THE FIGHT FOR AND AGAINST NATIONAL LIBERATION

The Spanish tradition of identifying individuals with the long-standing color/status marker terms, like *moreno/a* or *pardo/a*, next to the name in written documents continued for some time after emancipation. Spanish Cubans of any social status were marked by the honorific title *don* or *doña*. But this distinction, as we pointed out, was formally eliminated by the Spanish colonial state in 1891 and 1893, and the title *don* was made available to all. Before the outbreak of the last war of independence (1895-98), in the fight for the loyalties of Cuba's black population, the Spanish state tried to cut one link of the chain by which this part of the population was associated with slavery. In official state papers, the entire population of Cuba was given the status of *Españoles* (Spaniards). "Cubans," from the standpoint of the Spanish government, were mainly white Creoles who fought against Spain. Spain gave full and official citizen's rights to all males of twenty-five years and over in 1891, although it refrained from extending to Cubans the universal manhood suffrage recently instituted in European Spain (*voto universal*, Róldan de Montaud 1999:286-87). In 1893, pressure from the colored civil rights movement led by Juan Gualberto Gómez, caused the elimination of the old difference markers, *moreno/a* and *pardo/a*, from the times of slavery and extended to the entire population of Spanish Cuba the right to use the

33. From my own research, in 1994, on this type of source, like APC, Juzgado Municipal de Cienfuegos, Actos de Conciliación, different *cuadernos*, with some five dozen cases (1883-92); APC, Juzgado Municipal de Cienfuegos, Papeletas para demandas de conciliación (1883, 1885, and 1891); APC, Juzgado Municipal de Cienfuegos, demandas para juicios verbales (1883, 1884, 1889); APC, Juzgado Municipal de Cienfuegos, juicios de falta (1891-95), I have the impression that the writers of these documents do not use *s.o.a.* in writing, but until 1893, and, in some instances, thereafter, they use the open racial markers *moreno/a* and *pardo/a* for black and colored individuals, and *don* or *doña* for individuals with the status of "white;" see APC, Juzgado Municipal, juicio de faltas. Amenazas (Jan. 8, 1896): "Parda Pia Nodal contra Magin Torres." In the whole record, in which Magin Torres's many crimes are recorded, I found only the old color marker *moreno*. About prisoners and conditions in Cuban prisons, see Urrutia y Blanco 1882; Naranjo Orovio & Puig-Samper 1998.

honorific title of *don* or *doña* (Hevia Lanier 1996), titles which were, until now, reserved to distinguish the “whites.”³⁴

Ada Ferrer (1998, 1999a, 1999b) has traced the competing and more far-reaching ideology of transracial or “race-blind” nationality developed by Cuban nationalists in the fight against Spanish colonialism. In Cuban separatist military sources in time of war, often only the first surname, together with the tag *ciudadano cubano* (Cuban citizen) and the use of military rank, are used for *all* men to mark differences.

Therefore, the two instruments that we have to recognize former slaves largely cease to function if we apply them to official documents and discourses from the period of 1893-95 until the end of the war in 1898 by both the Spanish and the Cuban separatists. But in the official list of the so-called *Indice de Roloff*, on which military status was indicated, produced directly after the war in 1899 and 1900 under the control of the U.S. administration, a distinction in naming reappears: some soldiers had two surnames following the official Castilian form of the two *apellidos*, while other men had only one, and many of these men also had “big” slave surnames. In the lists of the *Indice*, these men often appear with the note “mother only” marked in the column pertaining to parents (*Yndice Alfabético* 1901).

RACE-MARKING ON THE GROUND

There is, however, another level: that of everyday life. It is distinct from the political and ideological fight for loyalties and from formal ideologies in general, although it is linked to both. This final mode of naming and race-marking emerged only from the research process itself – it seems never to have been an object of written debate, unlike the question of the title *don*. We were only able to see it in local archives like the Archivo Provincial de Cienfuegos, the Archivo Histórico Provincial de Santiago de Cuba, the Archivo Histórico Provincial de Villa Clara, and the Archivo Histórico Municipal de Remedios, and in the notarial records collected there. It surfaced when we began applying the methods of microhistory in the Italian style and to conduct historical research on the property rights and access to land of ex-slaves.

I began re-reading the information from very individualized sources, like notarial records of veterans’ back pay from the war in 1895-98, the payment taking place in 1904-05 and records of former slaves who bought land or borrowed money to do so. I analyzed three main bodies of sources: first, the

34. See also Schmidt-Nowara 2000. A closer look at the sources reveals that not all elites followed the wishes of the state; see Año de 1898, Censo electoral provincia de Santa Clara 15/03/1898, Provincia de Santa Clara, Ayuntamiento de Sagua la Grande.

notarial records and inheritance cases concerning the back pay for those who fought in the anticolonial war of 1895-98 (dating from the years of 1904-05); second, the notarial records of land purchases by ex-slaves; and third, annual series of notarial records which I searched for *sin otro apellido* (Zeuske 2001b; Scott & Zeuske forthcoming). In these documents, the phenomenon of marking through naming appears in all the forms described above: the use of one surname, the use of slave surnames, and, until the 1890s, with a direct marker of constructed color, *moreno/a* or *pardo/a*. But in nearly all these cases, and primarily in the notarial records dealing with property or financial transactions, the written addendum *sin segundo apellido* or *sin otro apellido (s.o.a.)* appears. The explicit notation of *s.o.a.* seems mostly to be linked to individuals who appear to have one of the “big” slave surnames of their respective region as a single *apellido*.³⁵ These are surnames that link them to their previous state of possession, of being owned. For us, this explicit written *s.o.a.* (in unofficial notaries records) is thus a hidden marker, and suggests that *s.o.a.* is a point of entry in the search for the open secrets of race in Cuba.

The first time I came across *s.o.a.*, after having copied thousands of names from the records of back pay without understanding what importance this addendum might have, it was linked to the *apellido* Fortún, in a record of the purchase of land in the country town of Lajas located in the Cienfuegos hinterland: “the *morenos libres* Leon and Natalia Fortún, without second surnames, who are from Africa.”³⁶ This mention of *s.o.a.* appears six years after 1878, when purchases of small houses in Lajas by former slaves became common.³⁷ Later, I found many records of sales of this type in Sagua la Grande, Cienfuegos, Santiago de Cuba, and Remedios, but none in Havana.³⁸

The majority of notarial records in which men and many women “without other surname” appear as actors, are, however, those dealing with the purchase of land plots (*fincas rústicas*, *terrenos*, *sitios de labor*) for urban houses, or for the houses themselves (*fincas urbanas*), with the last

35. For Cienfuegos: Acea, Tellería, Sarría; for Lajas: Moré, Terry, Apezteguía; for Sagua: Ribalta, Moré, Beronda; etc.

36. APC, Protocolos D. José Rafael Villafuerte y Castellanos 1883 (Enero-Dic.), fols. 418r-421r, escritura no. 98 “Venta de solares yermos,” Cienfuegos, June 14, 1883.

37. APC, Protocolos D. José Rafael Villafuerte y Castellanos 1878 (Enero-Dic.), fols. 387r-388v, escritura no. 149 “Venta de solares,” Cienfuegos, Julio 13, 1878.

38. This is linked to the specificity of this type of source and the business of notaries in the capital. In notarial records from Havana that I saw, apparently only a small percentage of the whole population is visible. The business of a sort of economic elite overshadows the kind of small transactions carried out by former slaves that are more prevalent in the countryside. Somewhere in the Havana notarial records, with further research, small transactions can be found.

representing the largest part. Only very few records deal with testaments, the recognition of *hijos naturales* (natural children), or giving *poder* (power of attorney) to lawyers.

But what exactly were the sense and the function of this tag, *s.o.a.*, from 1878 onward and continuing into the early years of the republic? Cuba's ex-slaves became citizens very quickly, in only sixteen years, between 1886 and 1902, but many of them were citizens "without other surname," meaning that they were stigmatized citizens. In fact, the long tradition of using this addendum even yielded a rare second surname in Cuba, borne by individuals such as Julio González Soa.³⁹

THE PRACTICAL AND PRAGMATIC SENSE OF *S.O.A.*

S.o.a. as a marker seems first to have had a very practical and pragmatic meaning. On the one hand, it is part of the answer to the question: "where did they go after slavery, and how can we know?" On the other hand, it is linked to the problem of the municipalities, one of the crucial points in Spanish and Cuban history of the nineteenth century. The methods of microhistory allow us to make a link between life histories, administrative history as political history, and social history, because it allows us to zoom in on different levels of history.

The Spanish state, seeking to end the Ten Years War in Cuba (1868-78), initiated profound transformations in its politics. At the end of the 1870s, it started a type of resettlement program (*reconstrucción*). Small plots of land in closely supervised settlements, most of them on land near the railroads, were given to Cubans to reinforce (or buy) their loyalty to Spain (Balboa Navarro 1998, 2000:49ff; Ferrer 1999b:73, 100-4; Scott & Zeuske forthcoming).

In the 1870s there were also changes in the structure of the provinces and municipalities as the state introduced new *términos municipales* (municipalities) that had the right to manage a part of their own tax income. This linked state interests of the Spanish empire to the interests of the Cuban *vecino* elite of rural towns with a population of about 8,000 people. The Spanish constitution of 1876 defined towns with 8,000 inhabitants or more as *términos municipales*, the lowest level in the state structure. When in 1884 the government in Madrid declared its intention take away the status of *términos municipales* away from all towns with fewer than 8,000 inhabitants, the local government of Lajas, the *ayuntamiento*, felt "threatened with death." The sec-

39. After half-a-century of silence, the problem of *s.o.a.* appeared in the national discourse of writers and artists; see Vallhonrat Villalonga 1948. In 1951, a film with the title *Sin otro apellido*, was produced in Santiago de Cuba; see also Sommer 1999.

retary of the *ayuntamiento*, Agustín Cruz y Cruz, wrote, on December 31, 1883, that Lajas had 7,548 inhabitants. In the following year, 1884, there was a strong increase in the number of inhabitants until December 31, with 828 persons through birth and immigration, the latter being of special interest. With a total of just 191 deaths and emigrations, the net increase for Lajas was 637 inhabitants. Thus, Lajas had acquired a population of 8,185 persons by 1884.⁴⁰ Nearly all of the individuals who formed this net increase were persons appearing on the *vecino* lists, with open race markers like *moreno/a* and *pardo/a* before their names (99 percent have only one surname).⁴¹ In effect, those who held the power in the town stood to benefit from an influx of former slaves, who were leaving the plantations, that could push their population to over 8,000.

How new neighborhoods were shaped in these conditions is suggested by a notarial record from Sagua la Grande in 1888. A physician, *licenciado* Don Manuel Vicente Yglesias y de la Coba and his brothers were owners of an old *sitio rústico* (small rural farm) named La Veguita, on a piece of land very near the extreme south of the town of Sagua la Grande. When former slaves began to search for land, Yglesias y de la Coba divided the two *caballerías* (about 67 acres) into 247 *solares* (portions of land), each of them with an area of 1,000 square meters. They sold a part of a solar to Don Manuel López y Fernández. To the north, the *solar* of the *moreno* Eusebio Perez neighbored it, to the south, it bordered the "calle de Brito," and to the west, the land of "*morenos* Elías Ribalta y Felipa Larrondo" was its neighbor.⁴² The mention of the bordering lands in the notarial records shows us that neighborhoods with many black or colored *vecinos* were forming.

Like the examples above, Santo Domingo was also a village fighting to be recognized as a *término municipal*.⁴³ A parallel process seems to have occurred in the *barrio* Pueblo Nuevo in Cienfuegos, which, while it was still a neighborhood of white and colored poor at the end of the 1840s, was trans-

40. APC, FAL leg. 2, exp. 108, no. 111, inv. 1, fols. 7r-8r. In 1846, Lajas had only 147 inhabitants, nearly all of Galician or Canarian descent (Zeuske & Zeuske 1998:392-96).

41. APC, FAL leg. 2, no. 111, exp. 132, inv. 1 (14 Dic. 1884-2 Enero 1885): "Rectificación del pordon vicinal del año 1884;" APC, FAL leg. 2, no. 111, exp. 133, inv. 1: Expediente que contiene documentos relativos a la rectificación del pordon vicinal del año 1885 (31 Dic.-20 Enero 1886); "Estado de las altas y bajas en el Registro de vecinos en este barrio desde 10 de Enero á 31 Diciembre de 1885," APC, FAL leg. 2, no. 111, exp. 132, inv. 1 (14 Dic. 1884-2 Enero 1885), fols. 6r-21r.

42. AHPVC, Protocolos Calixto María Casals y Valdés, 1888, t. 2 (Julio-Dic.), fols. 1047r-1050r, escritura no. 244 "Venta de dominio directo," Sagua la Grande, July 2, 1888.

43. AHPVC, Protocolos Calixto María Casals y Valdés, 1889 (Enero-Dic.), fols. 1142r-1143v, escritura "Venta de solar," Sagua, December 10, 1889.

formed into a neighborhood of black and mulatto families after 1878.⁴⁴ The new *barrios* also often formed near railroad tracks.

Some of these new inhabitants, who were much sought after by the *vecino* elite, appear in the notarial records as having purchased land. The majority of those who bought land were women (Zeuske forthcoming b), and they were very welcome new clients for the notaries or those selling land. Later, in 1893, they were a target of the new linguistic discretion of the late colonial state which suppressed the old marker for ex-slaves (*libre*) and the old race markers *moreno/a* and *pardo/a*. Thereafter they simply bore the discreet *s.o.a.*

S.O.A. AS A RACE MARKER AND A RACE-MAKER

For the notaries, all clients were equal, at least formally:⁴⁵ each individual was an *otorgante* (or a *compareciente*), or client. If former slaves went to the notary and had money, they were seen as *otorgantes* and land buyers like others. We do not know exactly why, in spite of that formal equality, notaries began to use the addendum *s.o.a.* in about 1880. Was it only because of the increased number of clients? Until the end of the 1880s, transactions related to slavery, such as buying and selling slaves, manumission – different forms of individual emancipation – and slaves as part of an inheritance, formed some 30 percent or more of notarial records.⁴⁶ In fact, it is possible to say that the greater part of a notary's business derived from mass slavery. The centers of slavery, Cienfuegos, Sagua, and Santiago, always had three or more notary's offices, whereas Santa Clara, a provincial capital since 1878, but a city surrounded by small-scale agriculture, tobacco farms, and cattle ranching, had only one until the beginning of the twentieth century. In Remedios, which is one of the seven colonial cities that was founded first, but which had only a weak sugar boom, we found only two notaries at the end of the nineteenth century (Venegas Delgado 1982). But Cruces, a small village with about 6,500 inhabitants in 1887 and a neighbor of Lajas, was surrounded by some of the world's largest sugarmills and had its own notary's office.

As ex-slaves and Chinese indentured servants began to appear as subjects, as *otorgante* – and no longer overwhelmingly as objects, as most were

44. We can find the same process taking place in the *barrio* El Seborucal at Abreus, where many persons with the "big" slave surnames like Acea, Apezteguia, and Terry – and even simply Abreus – settled. I would like to thank Orlando García Martínez for sharing this information with me.

45. On notaries imposing a greater precision on the identity of some, see Lefebvre-Teillard 1990.

46. This 30 percent represented a great deal of money. The percentage therefore does not reflect the real importance of the slavery business to notaries.

until 1880 – the record texts seem to reflect some uncertainty about whether a person with only one surname can be considered a full juridical personality (based on the pejorative sense of illegitimacy in Iberian culture, Schmieder 2002).⁴⁷ It is thus that we read in the following notarial records from 1881, these being amongst the first in using *s.o.a.*: “appeared the Asian Ricardo Robau, without second surname, citizen of the aforementioned [town], single, forty-two years of age and practicing trade.”⁴⁸ Or, “appeared the *parda libre* Paula Guevara, without second surname, citizen of this town, single, thirty-two years of age and by profession laundress ... owner of an urban lot with a one-storied wooden house with tiled roof ... having arranged the sale of the urban lot which is referred to with D. Antonio Someillan y Lamartere at a price of four-hundred gold.”⁴⁹ They operate as juridical persons, but they are simultaneously being marked as illegitimate.

The notarial *protocolos* (Ruiz Gomez 1874:xx-xv) are documents about the individual much more than the official census lists or other public documents are. From 1893 onward, notaries appear to have been reluctant to continue marking their new clients openly with the old and familiar race markers. After the gains of the civil rights movement, using distinguishing color labels was seen as impermissible, and at this time, notaries had already introduced the less visible and less offensive *sin segundo apellido*. Perhaps *s.o.a.* first emerged to give the notaries a substitute term so that there would be no blank space replacing the social and color markers.⁵⁰ *S.o.a.* began as a hidden marker. In

47. In Cuba, which had a white population of 1,052,397 persons in 1889 (U.S. War Department 1900:194, Table VI), the number of illegitimate persons in this group was 58,940 – the rate was thus ca. 5.6 percent for the whole island (U.S. War Department 1900:345, Table XVIII). In the province of Santa Clara, with 244,768 white persons (U.S. War Department 1900:194, Table VI), 8,985 children were counted as being illegitimate – the rate was thus ca. 3.7 percent.

48. AHPVC, Protocolos Antonio Palma Espinoza, Sagua la Grande, 1881, t. I (Enero-Marzo), fols. 362r-362v, escritura no. 119 “Fianza personal,” Sagua, March 3, 1881.

49. AHPVC, Protocolos Antonio Palma Espinoza, Sagua la Grande, 1881, t. I (Enero-Marzo), fols. 584r-585r, escritura no. 179 “Venta de finca urbana con censo,” Sagua, March 30, 1881. The *protocolos* in this and the previous footnote are two of the first in which *sin segundo apellido* is used (in previous records, like those from 1878, *s.o.a.* does not appear; see APC, Protocolos José Rafael Villafuerte y Castellanos, 1878 [Enero-Diciembre], fols. 387r-388v, escritura no. 149 “Venta de solares yermos,” Cienfuegos, July 13, 1878): Julian Romero sold a *solar* “to the *morena libre* Filomena Viera, native of Africa.” Although the provincial archive is in Santa Clara today, the notaries, like Palma Espinoza, had their offices in Sagua la Grande.

50. The law of the *Notariado* [notarial law] of 1873 does not define the term of *otorgante*. In the prescribed models, it only defines an *orden que se indica* [order of instruction] in relation to the two surnames. Thus the notaries could use this *orden* to fill the gap which the second surname was supposed to occupy with the written *sin otro apellido*; see Ruiz Gomez 1874:321.

the 1880s it started to acquire connotations of race, illegitimacy, and dishonor. We can only infer from the individualized sources like the *protocolos* and *testamentos*, taking into account individual, social, and political history, what exactly these connotations were at any given moment.

The basis of this mix of illegitimacy, race, and dishonor was the fact that race acquired a new meaning after the abolition of slavery in the years between 1886 and 1895. In the documents about the back pay of veterans of the 1895-98 war, we find a new stage, and a peak, in the racial connotations borne by the new marker, as in this example:

appeared ... Sra D^a Serafina Lozano without other surname, citizen of Lajas, single, forty-five years of age, runs own household ... Her illegitimate son D. Rafael Silvestre Lozano, citizen of Lajas, native of Camarones, nineteen years of age, single and *agricultor* [farmer], having died in this municipality the nineteenth of May, 1896 as a soldier of the Cuban Liberation Army ... [she] wishes to obtain the judicial declaration of the hereditary title to the payment that is due to him as a soldier of the Cuban Liberation Army, which amounts to about two hundred pesos.⁵¹

This source is a record not only of a request for money by a very modest woman of color, but also the demand for the status of *libertador* for her illegitimate son.

The claims for back pay date from shortly after the founding of the new republic in 1903-05. Part of the new Cuban republican elite, foremost among them were the high-ranking officers, believed it necessary to avoid the influx, both real and symbolic, of black and colored *libertadores* and their families to the centers of the towns (Zeuske 2001b).⁵² The formula of a written *s.o.a.* had the advantage of making the constructed racial identity of the *otorgantes* visible even when they were not present. Every reference to the notarial record would recall this stigma.

In racially mixed groups with a large percentage of people of color, I have found that *s.o.a.* is not used persistently as it is in the notarial records. There are even whole groups of individuals who refuse to use the addendum. The "Libro de identificación del gremio mutuo de Estibadores Cienfuegos,"⁵³ kept between 1904 and 1917, for example, is a membership list of 119 men to

51. APC, Protocolo Domingo Valdés Losada, 1904, t. 1 (Enero-Febrero), fols. 55r-57v: "acta notarial de información," no number, Cruces, October 15, 1903.

52. See also Zeuske 1999a. In the twentieth century, there were periods in which the possibilities of getting an official second surname, by means that circumvented the law, and in that way avoiding the *s.o.a.* marker, were very restricted. In other periods, when for political reasons the elites needed the support of the bearers of *s.o.a.*, the possibilities were more numerous; for example, the years 1906-08, 1924-25, and 1940: see Scott & Zeuske manuscript.

53. APC, Libro de identificación del gremio mutuo de Estibadores de Cienfuegos (Mayo de 1904-Diciembre de 1917).

a union of *stevedores*, most of them men of color. Members came from all over the province of Santa Clara. In the “Libro de identificación” their *gremio* (union) was listed as being composed of three races, the *raza negra*, the *raza mestiza*, and the *raza blanca*. We do not have information about the racial categories of six of the members, but we have everyone’s name. Of the 119 members, 93 have only one surname, this being 76 percent. Although color markers are used, *s.o.a.* is not used even once. Of the 93 men with one surname, 48 are classified as *raza negra*, 5 as *raza blanca*, and 34 as *raza mestiza*. Of the men with two surnames, 6 are classified as *raza blanca* and 7 as *raza mestiza*. Finally, 12 persons classified as *raza negra* have two surnames.⁵⁴

Here there are indications of another phase in the new race-consciousness in republican Cuba. The *gremio* members did not use hidden markers but open racial concepts, perhaps because the use of these had spread in Cuban society of the early republic. The other explanation may be that the members themselves used color categories as a means of differentiation within the group. Legitimacy or illegitimacy, the status ostensibly marked by *s.o.a.*, was less important to union members than it was to notaries.

In the 1880s when notaries began to use *s.o.a.*, the marker probably enabled them to avoid conflicts between the newcomers to the towns and the longer-established *vecinos*. Although the *vecino* elite and the white population of towns and villages in the sugar areas needed more inhabitants, they showed no eagerness to integrate this population into the centers of towns. This is where the new marker *s.o.a.* demonstrates clearly its function: people marked with it lived – from the perspective of the longer-established *vecinos* in the center of the town of Lajas, for instance – behind a clearly visible and discernable frontier (the railroad and a part of a street) that functioned effectively as a “color line.” But both the railroad tracks and the *s.o.a.* were nominally color-blind and conveyed the stigma without openly invoking color.

In all the rural hinterland of Cienfuegos and in urban areas of the municipality of Cienfuegos, during the last years of slavery and the first years of the postemancipation period, new neighborhoods with a black and colored population emerged. A good example is the sugar town of Santa Isabel de las Lajas. In Lajas, this new neighborhood (*barrio* or *barriada*) formed a part of the official neighborhood called Centro. The railroad tracks separated this new neighborhood from the older houses of the Centro. The semi-official name of the new neighborhood was “La calle del ferrocarril” (railroad street),

54. Juan Oviedo y Moya, Ramón Sarriá Álvarez, Leoncio Campos y Castillo, Emeterio Abreus y Abreus, Carlos Fortunato Corderón y Sarriá, Jesús Erices y Almeydas, Fernando Borell y Suárez, Marcelino Abreus y Abreus, Francisco Álvarez Villegas, Ernesto Stuart y Stuart, Tomás Ferrer Roque, and Juan Romero Ruiz.

as it is called in the official documents which mention the color-blind frontier, including the census of 1907. The former slaves' settlement took on a surprisingly formal and durable character very early on, and the *barriada* came to be seen as a "black" settlement (García Herrera 1972; Dumoulin 1974:19; Valdés Acosta 1974). The families in this neighborhood often had the "big" slave surnames Terry or Moré. In notarial records documenting sales and purchases, they appear with the addendum *s.o.a.* From this point on, we seem to see a new construction of race. The settlement on which they bought land soon came to be known as La Guinea, and it was also referred to as "land of [belonging to] the Congos." A U.S. Military Intelligence Division report from 1907 refers to "this part of town known as 'Little Africa.'"⁵⁵ Residents apparently referred to the back of La Guinea using terminology that echoed racist labeling of the time: "La Cueva de los Monos" or "monkey cave" (García Herrera 1972:145-46; Zeuske 1994, 2001b).⁵⁶ To scholars in the 1970s who explored its origins, this neighborhood seemed to be the result of reformist, paternalistic gifts of land to ex-slaves, which were designed to assure a labor force in the nearby Caracas sugarmill, one of the world's largest sugar centrals, by the grand planter Emilio Terry (García Herrera 1972). In the archives, a more complex picture emerges.⁵⁷ Some of the residents of La Guinea held legal title to urban plots measuring some 1,000 *varas* (a little less than 700 square meters). Tracing these titles back through the notaries' records held in the Archivo Provincial de Cienfuegos, I found documentation not of gifts, but of the *purchase* of land by former slaves. The sellers were people like Bárbara González Mesa, daughter of one of the major cane farmers of Lajas, who in turn was the former owner of the *ingenio* Santa

55. United States National Archives (USNA), Washington DC, Record Group (RG) 395, Records of the United States Army Overseas Operations and Commands, 1898-1942, series 1008, Army of Cuban Pacification, General Correspondence of the Military Intelligence Division, file 75, item 89, February 17, 1908, Lajas.

56. On earlier use of the term "Guinea," see Tomich 1993. I am only able to discuss and present the data from my sources here. The developing community displays forms of external political cohesion clientelism, in addition to the cohesion that is inherent to the existing households and neighborhoods of black or colored people. Internal factors contributing to social cohesion, such as kinship, religion, and language, did not appear in this type of source (or only in the few instances that we were also able to analyze the life histories of the witnesses appearing in the *protocolos*).

57. Interview by Orlando García, Félix Tellería, and Michael Zeuske with Cándido Terry y Terry and Zenaida Armenteros Bejerano, March 5, 2000. Terry and Armenteros generously showed us their property title, which is a copy of the original located in APC, Protocolos José Rafael Villafuerte y Castellanos (1883), fols. 418r-421r, escritura no. 98 "Venta de solares yermos," Cienfuegos, June 14, 1883; see also Scott & Zeuske forthcoming.

Sabina (later Caracas). These landowners conveyed the title as a sale, at the price of 50 pesos for a vacant lot. Later, in June of 1883, Don Julian Romero sold similarly empty land to “the *morenas libres* Mónica and Victoria de la Torre ... who are from Africa.”⁵⁸ They were identified as being without profession, single, aged thirty and forty-four years, one a resident of Lajas, the other of Sagua la Grande. The seller, Romero, was born in Santa Clara, worked in the country, and had lived in Lajas. The land itself came from property that had previously belonged to Bárbara González, and it bordered the lot belonging to “la *morena* Antonia Terry.”⁵⁹ León and Natalia Fortún bought from the same Julian Romero a housing lot on which their descendants still live. The buyers were listed as being “the *morenos libres* Leon and Natalia Fortun, without second surnames, who are from Africa, single, forty and thirty-four years of age, dedicated to farm work, residents of the neighborhood of the Second District of Sagua la Grande.”⁶⁰ In these documents we see the full range of markers, from a famous “big” slave surname like Terry and explicit colonial color terms like *morenos libres*, to intimations of illegitimacy and former slave status in the phrase *sin segundos apellidos*.

Combining an analysis of rural Cuba’s microhistory with one of individual life histories illuminates the development of a new society and the shaping of a new racism that, in spite of the hidden nature of its emergence, forms part of the open secrets in Cuban history of the twentieth century. It was a racism that was voiced openly in the realm of culture, in the events of incarceration and death, including burial and pathology,⁶¹ and the institution of public health, as the research of recent scholars has shown (Helg 1995; Bronfman 2000). But the fiction of a race-blind republic was maintained within the civil and judicial spheres. In reality, however, to enter attain a status within the judicial world of this “race-blind” republic, former slaves would have to accept a new and different marker, the stigmatizing *s.o.a.*,

58. APC, Protocolos D. José Rafael Villafuerte y Castellanos, 1883, fols. 412r-415v, escritura no. 97 “Venta de terreno yermo,” Cienfuegos, June 14, 1883.

59. APC, Protocolos D. José Rafael Villafuerte y Castellanos, 1883, fols. 412r-415v, escritura no. 97 “Venta de terreno yermo,” Cienfuegos, June 14, 1883.

60. APC, Protocolos D. José Rafael Villafuerte y Castellanos, 1883, fols. 418r-421r, escritura no. 98 “Venta de solares yermos,” Cienfuegos, June 14, 1883.

61. See APC, Libro de Autopsías, Cienfuegos 1899-1922; APC Libro de Entierros, Cienfuegos 1898-1902.

designed to identify their names as incomplete⁶² and label their parentage as dishonorable. The words of Esteban Montejo (Barnet 1967:18)⁶³ clearly reflect the sentiment that could be evoked by such naming, and the resulting individual rebellion against this type of stigma: "Since I wanted to have two names like everybody else, so I wouldn't be called 'jungle baby,' I took that one [Mesa], and there it was."

62. This stigma developed in colonial times and turned into one of the most widespread signs of everyday racism and membership to the underclass in the Cuban republic between 1902 and 1959. The following commentary by Esther Pérez y Pérez (personal communication) about the end of this period is illustrative of the deep-rooted nature of the association: "Your comment on your *s.o.a.* [I had written to her that all Germans are 'without second surname.' If not, my full name in Castilian culture would be 'Michael Zeuske Ludwig.'] reminded me of something in my adolescence. As I had a very protected childhood of the Protestant middle class of Havana, as a girl I never got in contact with the *s.o.a.s.* But when I was nine the revolution triumphed and when I was eleven all private schools were closed, so I began to get in contact with everything. It was then that for the first time I was told by one of my classmates what that was, and what *s.o.a.* meant. And since it was a time of transgressions I started to tell everybody that I bore my mother's surname (which was technically true because my mother as well as my father are Pérez) hoping that I would be considered an illegitimate child which in my distorted adolescent imagination compensated for the comfortable life I had led and that was a terrible burden to me when I compared it with that of my new friends."

63. On individual naming processes (Montejo, Benny Moré) see Zeuske 2003.

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Yndice Alfabético y Defunciones del Ejército Libertador de Cuba. Datos compilados y ordenados por el Ynspector General del Ejército Libertador Mayor General Carlos Roloff y Mialofsky, ayudado del Jefe del Despacho, Comandante de Estado Mayor Gerardo Forrest, Editado oficialmente por disposición del General Leonard Wood, Gobernador Militar de Cuba, 1901. Havana: Ymprenta de Rambla y Bouza.

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Sadly, Dr. Richard B. Sheridan passed away in April 2002. We are publishing this article posthumously with the assistance of Roderick A. MacDonald, who agreed to help us publish the text in a way we think accords with Professor Sheridan's intentions.

THE CONDITION OF THE SLAVES ON THE SUGAR PLANTATIONS OF SIR JOHN GLADSTONE IN THE COLONY OF DEMERARA, 1812-49

JOHN GLADSTONE: A BRIEF BIOGRAPHY

Sir John Gladstone (1764-1851) was a prominent Liverpool merchant, member of parliament, and father of a prime minister. He owned slaves of African origin in the South American colony of Demerara who led a slave rebellion that stands out in the annals of servile revolts. Together with their white managers, Gladstone's slaves in Demerara and Jamaica produced a large part of his fortune, which elevated his family from the status of shopkeeper and corn merchant at Leith, Scotland, to Liverpool merchant prince with commercial, financial, and political ties that extended from the East Indies to the West Indies.

Sir John was born at Leith, Scotland, on December 11, 1764, the son of Helen and Thomas Gladstone. He was one of sixteen children, of whom four were lost in infancy. At the age of thirteen, John was taken from school and apprenticed to the manager of a roperie and sailcloth company in preparation for a career in the "Mercantile Part of Business and in Keeping Regular Accounts and Books." After finishing his apprenticeship, he entered his father's corn and chandlery business at Leith. As a young supercargo, or traveling merchant, he saw "something of the world of northern Europe" and was able "to pit his wits against the foreigner on alien soil" (Checkland 1971:13). On May 1, 1787, John Gladstone became a partner with Edgar Corrie of Liverpool for a term of fourteen years. There he came in contact with some of the leading traders of the day. He dispatched the first vessel which sailed from Liverpool to Calcutta after the trade of the East Indies had been thrown open. After a decade of trade, shipping, and finance in the West Indies and

Demerara, Gladstone acquired a one-half interest in a sugar plantation in Demerara.¹

In 1792 Sir John married Jane, daughter of Joseph Hall of Liverpool, who died without issue. He married, secondly, on April 29, 1800, Anne, daughter of Annie and Andrew Robertson, Esq., provost of Dingwall, Ross-shire, Scotland. By her he was the father of four sons and two daughters. Sir Thomas Gladstone, the eldest son and second baronet was a Conservative member of parliament. Robertson, the second son, joined the partnership with his father and George Grant. John Neilson, the third son, was a captain in the navy and a member of parliament. William Ewart, the fourth son, was the eminent statesman who was four times prime minister. The daughters were Anne Mackenzie and Helen Jane, both unmarried. John Gladstone sat in parliament for many years, first as a Liberal. His admiration for George Canning, the prime minister, led to a change in his political allegiance, and he became a staunch Tory. Gladstone took a prominent part in the support of charitable and religious institutions. He was created a baronet by Sir Robert Peel on July 18, 1846, and died December 5, 1851 (Stephen & Lee 1917; Matthew 1986: 3-9, 28, 76-78, 131, 251).

POLITICAL, SOCIAL, AND ECONOMIC BACKGROUND OF DEMERARA

The condition of the slaves on the Gladstone plantations must be seen against the background of the political, social, and economic history of Demerara as well as the events during the period of this study. Guiana is the name given to the region of northeast South America which now includes French Guiana, Suriname, and Guyana. In 1621 the first Dutch West India Company was chartered and Dutch traders began to explore the interior of Guiana. The shift from trade to the more profitable sugar production was accelerated during the early decades of the seventeenth century. "By 1704," as Raymond T. Smith (1962:15) observes, "the Company operated some plantations on the river banks near Fort Kijkoveral and private cultivations were also spreading slowly down the river banks." A later period of growth came from 1742 to 1772 under the direction of Laurens Storm van 's-Gravesande, the Secretary of the Dutch West India Company. He opened the Demerara region to settle-

1. I am indebted to Sir William Gladstone for granting permission to search the Glynne-Gladstone MSS at the Flintshire Record Office, North Wales, and to quote extracts from these papers. I am also indebted to the late Professor Sidney G. Checkland, Chair, Department of Economic History, University of Glasgow, for kindly assisting me with the Gladstone family history with special reference to Demerara and Jamaica. And finally I am grateful for the help of the late Professor Isaac Dookhan, the late Professor Douglas Hall, and Professor Richard A. Lobdell.

ment and encouraged settlers from other nations, mainly British, to settle newly opened lands. British planters from Barbados and the Leeward Islands played a prominent role in the development of Essequibo and Demerara. By 1760, according to Storm van 's-Gravesande, British settlers were in a majority in Demerara (Smith 1962). Nine years later they owned fifty-six plantations and managed others for absentee Dutch proprietors. By 1813, most of the white settlers were British (Sheridan 1974:442-44; see also Lobdell 1966).

According to Rev. G.C. Edmundson, the British occupation set in motion "a constant flow of new settlers from the British West Indies, and with the help of British capital the colonies entered upon a period of increasing prosperity." During this period of occupation, "more and more plantations of sugar, cotton and coffee fell into Anglo-Scottish hands, but their prosperity, which depended on Negro labour, was considerably checked after 1807 by the abolition of the slave trade. The anglicization of the Colonies meanwhile went on apace" (Edmundson 1923:6-7). Demerara, Essequibo, and Berbice were united into the colony of British Guiana in 1831.

By comparison with other British Caribbean sugar colonies, of which Jamaica was the largest and of greatest economic importance, the planters of Demerara and its sister colonies differed markedly in their control of the water resources and in other respects. Dr. John Hancock, who practiced medicine in Demerara in the period of this study, wrote as follows of the transfer of hydraulic society from the Netherlands to British Guiana:

None but Hollanders could ever on such a continent, have thought of robbing the sea, or fencing it out from a swampy coast with such intense labour as is found continually necessary to keep up the cultivation. The original Dutch colonists, indeed, seem to have sought, in this country, only another Holland, and they, in a district boundlessly rich and uncultivated, set, at an early period, about gaining land from the sea! They accordingly planted themselves on the muddy land of the sea-shore, where they had the comforting reflection that they must necessarily be drowned by the sea on one side or by the *bush-water* on the other, unless they were protected by dykes. (Hancock 1835:6)

In their essay entitled, "Slavery and Slave Culture in a Hydraulic Society: Suriname," Gert Oostindie and Alex Van Stipriaan (1995) have thought through the implications of different ecological adaptations of the plantation model with special reference to Suriname and the Guyanas in general. They focus attention on significant variation of material conditions of the *polder* plantations located on the low land reclaimed from the sea by dikes, dams, canals, trenches, and other earthen barriers. "Oral tradition suggests," according to the authors, "that the arduous digging of *polder* canals and trenches in the heavy sea clay of the coastal plains provoked deep resentment and overt slave resistance." Furthermore, "[t]he negative impact of water-related labor is also underlined by the fact that, during the second half of the eighteenth

century, the number of slaves running away from sugar plantations were [*sic* was] two to four times as high as that from coffee estates" (Oostindie & Van Stipriaan 1995:87; see also Beachey 1957:94-98).

GLADSTONE'S DEMERARA PLANTATIONS

John Gladstone's involvement with plantations was precipitated by financial interest. Although he did not abandon his trade to India, he found it was generally more profitable to engage in trade, shipping, and finance with the plantation colonies in the West Indies and Guianas. Traders made a profit on supplies sent out from Britain, they earned a rate of interest on lending money, and a commission on gross sales of West India commodities in the home market. By 1803 and 1804, Gladstone was making large purchases of sugar and cotton in the West Indies, and especially Demerara. While it was customary for the planters to run up short-term debts, a considerable number went further in debt and incurred mortgage debts which were often foreclosed by the mortgagees. Gladstone began to acquire plantations in Demerara in 1812 with a one-half interest in plantation Success (Checkland 1971:59). Four years later he acquired full ownership of this plantation, which was one of the largest and most productive properties in Demerara (Checkland 1971:123). Soon after the acquisition he changed it from growing coffee to sugar production and more than doubled the gang of slaves from 160 to near 330 (Checkland 1954).

In addition to Success, John Gladstone acquired six plantations during the mid and late 1820s. They were estates which he and his partners had supplied with British and North American plantation inputs and marketed the slave-produced staples – all transported in the company's ships. The resident and absentee owners of the estates had died or were living in Europe, leaving behind debts and heirs living in Europe who, in several cases, were forced to sell their mortgaged estates at sacrifice prices. Gladstone's seven estates in Demerara were as follows: Success, Wales, Waller's Delight, Covenden, Hampton Court, Vreedenhoop, and Vreedestein. Approximately 170 slaves were transferred from Waller's Delight to Success estate. In October 1828, 200 slaves were transferred from Covenden to Vreedenhoop estate. Waller's Delight and Covenden had both been coffee properties. As a multiple plantation owner, Gladstone and his agents were able to readjust and re-allocate the slaves, livestock, and buildings on the properties he owned. While profits were enhanced by these and other measures, the welfare of the slaves was often impaired by heavier workloads and adjustments in the provision of living quarters, hospitals, and family and communal life (Checkland 1954, 1971; Rivière 1968:291-92).

REV. JOHN SMITH, GLADSTONE, AND THE DEMERARA SLAVE
REVOLT OF 1823

For several months in 1823, the lives of the inhabitants of plantations in Demerara were disrupted by a slave revolt that had its origin at the center of the British Empire at Whitehall. In May of that year, Thomas Fowell Buxton introduced in the House of Commons his famous resolution, "[t]hat the state of slavery is repugnant to the principles of the British constitution and of the Christian religion, and that it ought to be abolished gradually throughout the British colonies" (Klingberg 1926:195). After debate in the House, Lord Bathurst, the Colonial Secretary, circulated a dispatch for Demerara, instructing the Court of Policy – a legislative assembly carried over from Dutch days – to adopt the resolutions concerning the amelioration of the condition of the slaves. The resolutions called for the prohibition of the flogging of female slaves, the prohibition of the driving of slaves in their field labor by the sound of the whip, and of the arbitrary infliction of it by the driver as a stimulus to labor. Lieutenant Governor John Murray received Bathurst's dispatch on July 7, 1823, but it was not until the end of August that the Court of Policy decided to adopt the resolutions.

Reverend John Smith and his wife arrived in Demerara from England in February, 1817, where he took up his ministry at the chapel of the London Missionary Society on the Le Resouvenir sugar plantation, six miles from Georgetown, the port city and capital. He was received with enthusiasm by large congregations of slaves, several of whom were to become deacons of the church. He was also met with opposition from Governor Murray and many planters, managers, and overseers who claimed that his chapel services diverted the slaves from their expected labors. Smith was warned by the planocracy to say nothing that would encourage the slaves to be displeased with their masters or dissatisfied with their status in society. They were not to be emancipated, but to be afforded the consolation of religion. Moreover, Missionary Smith was forbidden to teach the slaves to read (Jakobsson 1972:301-10; Viotti da Costa 1994).

On August 21, 1823, a few days before John Smith was arrested and charged with complicity in the slave revolt, he wrote a letter to George Burder, Secretary of the London Missionary Society, of which the following extracts are quoted:

These are the facts of the case! The causes which have brought about this state of things, are, in my opinion, too obvious to be mistaken. Ever since I have been in the colony, the slaves have been most grievously oppressed. A most immoderate quantity of work has, very generally, been exacted of them, not excepting women far advanced in pregnancy. When sick, they have been commonly neglected, ill treated, or half starved. Their punishments have been frequent and severe. Redress they have so seldom been able to obtain, that many of them have long discontinued to seek it, even when they have been notoriously wronged. (Smith, quoted in Jakobsson 1972:323)

Smith wrote further that although the whip had been used with an unsparing hand, he believed that the slaves had not been more frequently or more severely flogged than formerly. Nevertheless, the planters did not appear to have considered that "the increase of knowledge among the slaves required that an alteration should be made in the mode of treating them" (Smith, quoted in Jakobsson 1972:323).

Generally speaking, the revolt broke out among the slaves because they believed they had been granted rights by Parliament that their masters were withholding. The adjoining plantations, *Success* and *Le Resouvenir*, were focal points of the rebellion, which broke out on the night of August 18, 1823. The chief leader was Jack Gladstone, a cooper on *Success*, who conspired with several other slave leaders to incite their followers to revolt. Closely associated with Jack was his father, Quamina, a carpenter on *Success*, and head deacon of the chapel on *Le Resouvenir*. The rebellion started on *Success* and was concentrated in a twenty-five-mile coastal strip to the east of the Demerara River and south of Georgetown. It has been estimated that, out of 75,000 slaves in the United Colony of Demerara and Essequibo, about 13,000 took part in the rising. They belonged to thirty-seven out of the three hundred and fifty estates in the colony. The white inhabitants were imprisoned or put in the stocks and their houses ransacked for arms. Three white civilians were killed, but no military or militiamen. William Law Mathieson (1926:130-31) says that "for several days small bodies of regulars and militia were engaged in dispersing the rebels, who had a few muskets and pistols, but were armed mostly with 'machets' or cane-knives." Approximately 250 slaves were either killed in the insurrection or executed after they were tried and found guilty. Ten of the fifty-one slaves who were condemned to death were decapitated and their heads stuck on poles on the roadside. Jack Gladstone was banished to the British colony of St. Lucia in the West Indies. According to Emilia Viotti da Costa (1994:244), "A letter his owner, the powerful and prestigious John Gladstone, sent on his behalf may explain this decision that saved his life" (see also Craton 1982:267-69, 273-88).

Smith was charged at the trial with promoting discontent and dissatisfaction in the minds of the slaves toward their lawful masters, managers, and overseers, thereby intending to excite the slaves to revolt (Jakobsson 1972:325-27). He was found guilty of the charges by a court martial and sentenced to death by hanging, with a recommendation of mercy. He was reprieved by King George IV, but it came too late to save the missionary who died in a small damp prison room from consumption (Jakobsson 1972; Craton 1982).

John Gladstone expressed anger at the negative publicity directed to himself and his slaves, and especially to the veracity of the entry in the journal of John Smith, dated August 30, 1817: "The Negroes of *Success* have complained to me lately of excessive labour and very severe treatment. I told one

of their overseers that I thought they would work the people to death" (Smith, quoted in Rivière 1968:287). Gladstone wrote to William A. Hankey, an official of the London Missionary Society, on December 24, 1824, declaring these assertions to be false and wholly unfounded. He claimed that the labor required from his slaves had always been moderate, and when the cultivation was changed from cotton to sugar, the number of the gang was about doubled from 160 to near 330 without any complaint on their part. He wrote that his

intentions have ever been to treat my people with kindness in the attention to their wants of every description, and to grant them every reasonable and practicable indulgence; these instructions have been strictly adhered to by my Attorney & Manager ... therefore, from you and from your Society, I claim that Justice and Protection to which I am entitled.²

Hankey replied to Gladstone's letter, saying that the passage from John Smith's *Journal* was included in a publication intended to defend Gladstone's character by proving

how little a non-resident proprietor can control the conduct of his Agents ... Indeed it would be no forced construction to say that the observation serves its point, from the inference that Mr G[ladstone] is among the most humane of those absent proprietors of W[est] Indian property.³

JAMES CROPPER AND GLADSTONE DEBATE THE CONDITIONS OF SLAVERY

From the standpoint of the slaves on his Demerara plantations, the year 1823 was eventful for John Gladstone. In Parliament, he listened with great concern to speeches by Buxton and Canning calling for the amelioration of slavery in the West Indies. The same year saw the involvement of his own slaves in the insurrection in Demerara. In Liverpool he was engaged in a heated debate with James Cropper, a fellow-townsmen, on the state of slavery. The debate was first published in two local newspapers, and later in a pamphlet in February 1824 by the West India Association of Liverpool, under the short title: *The Correspondence Between John Gladstone, Esq., M.P. and James Cropper, Esq.*⁴

2. Flintshire Record Office (FRO), Hawarden, Wales, letter from Gladstone to Hankey, December 20, 1824, in John Gladstone's Letterbook, Glynne-Gladstone MSS, pp. 1-2.

3. FRO, letter from Hankey to Gladstone, December 29, 1824, John Gladstone's Letterbook, Glynne-Gladstone MSS, p. 5.

4. *The Correspondence Between John Gladstone, Esq., M.P. and James Cropper, Esq., on the Present State of Slavery in the British West Indies and in the United States of America; and on the Importation of Sugar from the British Settlements in India. With an Appendix Containing Several Papers on the Subject of Slavery.* (Liverpool: Liverpool West India Association, 1824) cited hereinafter as *Gladstone-Cropper Correspondence*.

James Cropper (1773-1840), merchant and philanthropist, was the son of Thomas and Rebecca Cropper, who, like their son, were Quakers. He was born at Winstanley in Lancashire. At the age of seventeen he entered as an apprentice in the house of the Rathbone Brothers, who were American merchants in Liverpool. He was the founder of the well-known Liverpool mercantile house of Cropper, Benson & Company. The company's import trade included American cotton and Indian sugar. Cropper took a lively interest in religious and philanthropic activities, especially the abolition of slavery in the West Indies.

James Cropper began the debate with a letter entitled, "Impolicy of Slavery." In the opening paragraph he called attention to the cruelty and injustice of slavery wherever it had spread over the face of the earth. He wrote that "it had long been a matter of public notoriety, that the Slaves in the West Indies are degradingly driven, like cattle, by the whip at their labour, which, for nearly half the year lasts for one-half the night, as well as the whole day!"⁵ Furthermore, he wrote that the slaves were held and dealt with as property, often branded with a hot iron, liable to be sold at the will of their master, compelled to work on the Sabbath for their own subsistence, and denied the advantages of religious instruction. He argued that if the slaves in the West Indies were freed, they would not only produce more cane sugar and other tropical commodities, but also consume much more of British manufactures. "Thus would Great Britain find within her own dominions abundant scope for the extension of her commerce, and share with the rest of the world the vast field which would be opened beyond them."⁶

Gladstone replied to Cropper on September 27, 1823, with reference to the habits of the slaves, the regulation of their labor, and their general treatment in the colonies of Demerara, Essequibo, and Berbice. "There, night labour of the Slaves is now unknown," he wrote. "Even on Sugar Estates, the grinding [of the canes] ceases at sunset; and the boilers, the only parties that remain longer, finish cleaning up before nine o'clock."⁷ Their general food, in addition to salt fish and occasionally salted provisions, consisted of plantains which they preferred to other food. Plantains were cultivated in the ordinary daily work of each estate, or purchased when deficient, and they were supplied with more than they could consume. The slaves were provided with clothing that was suitable for the climate and their situation. "They have the Sabbath and their other holydays to dispose of, for the purpose of religion, if so inclined."⁸ Gladstone wrote that the slaves had ample spare time on their working days for attending to the raising of their livestock for sale and for cultivating their small gardens.

5. *Liverpool Mercury*, October 31, 1823.

6. *Gladstone-Cropper Correspondence*, pp. 1-15.

7. *Gladstone-Cropper Correspondence*, pp. 1-15.

8. *Gladstone-Cropper Correspondence*, pp. 1-15.

The Slave, when guilty of crime, is tried in the same manner as his master. No driver or overseer can punish beyond six lashes for any offense. Connexion by marriage is encouraged, and its lawful fruits of increase rewarded. Families cannot be separated, but, when disposed of, must be sold together. In cases of Sickness, able medical aid is provided; and in old age, when invalided, every comfort is afforded and continued. Their dwellings are roomy and commodious, their labour regulated and moderate.⁹

By way of a caveat, Gladstone admitted that there were some exceptions to his description of slavery in Demerara, "for there was no society of which worthless and wicked individuals did not form a part." Among the wicked individuals, in his opinion, were the slave emancipators in England and "the dangerous doctrines of their misguided agents" in the colonies.¹⁰

Gladstone felt insulted when he read that Cropper sneered at the idea of a West Indian planter residing in England and being a member of the Bible Society and active in promoting the circulation of the sacred book. Cropper was said to have expressed his surprise that Gladstone "should wish to promote the improvement and to better the condition of the Slaves after having stated, that the chief ringleaders of the Demerara insurrection were from estates where they had received most indulgences."¹¹ Gladstone wrote that the planters of Demerara were most desirous, as far as their means would enable them, to provide that the religious instruction of the slaves should come from "Clergymen of the Established Churches, and not from the Missionary Societies."¹²

James Cropper, in his final letter of the debate, declared that the decrease of population was incontrovertible proof of insufficient food, or forced labor, where a man was not allowed to be his own judge of the fitness of his body to bear it. He wrote that different reasons had been given for the decrease of the slaves in the sugar colonies:

In Demerara, where the importations [from Africa] seem to have been most recent and extensive, and where about one-half the Slaves, in 1817, were Africans, one-eighth or one-ninth of the population are an excess of males; but this is no adequate cause of the decrease.¹³

Furthermore, he dismissed the argument of the planters that promiscuous sexual intercourse, to which the slaves from Africa were allegedly so much

9. *Gladstone-Cropper Correspondence*, pp. 1-15.

10. *Gladstone-Cropper Correspondence*, pp. 1-15; see also *Liverpool Courier*, November 27, 1823.

11. *Gladstone-Cropper Correspondence*, pp. 1-15.

12. *Gladstone-Cropper Correspondence*, pp. 1-15; see also *Liverpool Courier*, December 14 and 13, 1823.

13. *Gladstone-Cropper Correspondence*, pp. 1-15.

addicted, was a valid reason for the low birthrate. From the preceding facts he presented, Cropper said he was forced to the conclusion that the ill-treatment of the slaves had kept down the slave population.

John Gladstone, on the contrary, devoted much attention in his contributions to the debate with Cropper to the demographic and social characteristics of slavery in Demerara. He referred to the Slave Registrar's Triennial Report for the colony of Demerara, made up to September 1, 1823. The report showed that there remained in the colony, of African males, 16,258, of African females, 9,745. He wrote that a very large proportion of the Creole population was under twenty years of age, while many of the African Negroes were far advanced in years. "Thus there is" he wrote, "for the purpose of natural increase an unproductive number of 5,513 males, and it is well known, that on the part of the part of the imported Africans, there was a dislike to marriage, or restricted intercourse between the sexes." Gladstone predicted that when the proportion of the sexes became equal, as they then were in the United States, "we may confidently expect the increase from natural causes and good management alone."¹⁴

Checkland (1971:191-92) says that Cropper's position was anomalous, since his Liverpool firm was among the greatest importers of American slave-grown cotton, and he wanted to develop India as a source of sugar and remove tariff preferences and slave labor which gave encouragement to West Indian planters. Largely as a result of their debate, the long-standing friendship between Gladstone and Cropper was utterly destroyed.

JOHN MACLEAN'S BENIGN DESCRIPTION OF SLAVERY AT VREEDENHOOP

The lengthy and bitter debate between Cropper and Gladstone spurred further investigations into the working conditions of Gladstone's slaves. On March 3, 1824, John MacLean, Jr., manager of Vreedenhoop estate on the east coast of Demerara, wrote a letter to Alexander McDonnell, Esq., Secretary of "The Committee of the Inhabitants of Demerara." McDonnell had applied to MacLean and other "respectable medical practitioners and managers residing in different parts of the colony, for reports illustrative of the general treatment of the slaves under their charge" (McDonnell 1824:146). These reports were said to be scrupulously framed and were furnished for the purpose of drafting a general report applicable to the colony as a whole. No doubt these reports were published to demonstrate the positive characteristics of slavery

14. *Gladstone-Cropper Correspondence*, pp. 1-15; see also *Liverpool Courier*, 4 December 1823.

in the aftermath of the servile rebellion of the previous year. The short title of McDonnell's pamphlet is *Considerations on Negro Slavery*.

John MacLean wrote that he had resided constantly in the colonies of Guiana for nearly fourteen years. He was first employed on a plantation on the east coast of Demerara in the capacity of manager for six years. It had a labor force of about 450 slaves, and was cultivated in coffee and cotton, and later converted to sugar. In 1816, MacLean removed for several years to a Demerara cotton estate with 306 slaves, after which he was an attorney and manager for three years of a sugar plantation in the colony of Berbice with a gang of 325 slaves. He wrote that his experience on the above estates gave him "a perfect conviction that no man among us is so callous to the sufferings of a fellow-creature as to treat a sick negro with the smallest shadow of neglect" (McDonnell 1824:156).

MacLean came to Vreedenhoop estate in April, 1822, and found a gang of 356 slaves cultivating sugar cane and coffee. He wrote that the slave houses were made of hardwood frames and the roofs covered with shingles; they were divided into commodious and comfortable apartments for the different families. Clothing was sent from England annually and distributed among the slaves. There were 200 acres on the estate bearing plantains and the slaves were allowed as many bunches as they wished, provided they did not sell any. Fish and salt were distributed to each family weekly and occasionally rum and tobacco.

For the medical treatment of the slaves, the hospital and lying-in rooms were said to be of the most comfortable construction with apartments for the different sexes, and furnished with every convenience that could contribute to the ease and eventual recovery of the sick. Patients were supplied with beef, pork, barley, and wine. They were visited almost every day by the medical practitioner, who furnished an abundance of medicines. The doctor was assisted by two nurses. MacLean said he never saw a sick slave die from a circumstance that human endeavors or foresight could prevent.¹⁵

Regarding the labor of the slaves, MacLean wrote that "the quantity of work required of an able negro daily, depends, in a great measure, on the state of the soil, and, like all general rules, must vary according to circumstances" (McDonnell 1824:156). He went on to state the workday requirements for holing lands in preparation for planting cane, weeding, cutting, and carrying canes to the mill, and carrying green bagasse. He said he put two men to every furnace, three to carrying dry bagasse for fuel, and one boilerman to every copper boiler. For trenching or shoveling soil that washed down the trenches from the back-lands, he gave a prime man a rood (a linear measure of seven

15. For the slave hospitals and medical personnel in British Guiana, see Sheridan 1985:279-80.

or eight yards) of a twelve-foot trench, four feet deep. "If a navigable canal, and 5 feet deep, with parapet, I give only 10 feet" (McDonnell 1824:157). Furthermore, whatever the size or dimensions of a drain, trench, or canal might be, he expected a prime slave to dig 550 to 600 cubic feet of earth per day (McDonnell 1824:154-58).

John MacLean closed his letter with comments on the condition of the slaves on Vreedenhoop plantation. He said that exclusive of the indulgences already mentioned, the slaves had extensive fields in the most productive soil in the back-lands of Demerara, which were cultivated in various roots and vegetables. About their houses they had "every description of feathered stock peculiar to this country for which they effected a ready sale, either in their respective districts, or at the town market" (McDonnell 1824:158). On Sundays the slaves attended public worship as frequently as they wished. He said he gave them passes and letters to get them baptized. MacLean declared that before the insurrection of 1823, the slaves enjoyed every comfort, and he was convinced that slavery was only known to them by name. He lamented the fact that

their minds were inflamed by ambiguous preaching, and religious sentences, selected from various books, and explained in language strongly calculated to impress them with the idea that their condition ought to be better, and that their masters were their enemies, inasmuch as they deprived them of supposed rights. (McDonnell 1824:158)

THE AMELIORATION ORDINANCE OF 1826

Efforts to improve the condition of the slaves by means of public policy and practice were revived and expanded in the period following the Demerara slave revolt of 1823. By the terms of the Amelioration Ordinance which took effect on January 1, 1826, a protector of slaves was appointed, slaves were made immune from labor on Sunday, and they were provided with religious instruction. Furthermore, field work was limited to the hours from 6 a.m. to 6 p.m., with a midday intermission of two hours; the whipping of women was abolished; the punishment of men was limited to twenty-five lashes; a record of punishments was to be kept; slaves were accorded the privilege of marriage, of acquiring and holding property, and of purchasing their freedom (Dalton 1855:364-65; Williams 1964:197-99). The office of the Protector of Slaves in British Guiana was a "delusion," according to Eric Williams. The incumbent wrote in 1832, "I am desperately unpopular" (quoted in Williams 1964:199).

From the tenor of the dispatches he received from Demerara, it is probably true to say that John Gladstone believed that his slaves were so well treated that they did not need the sanctions of the amelioration law. Almost all

of these dispatches came from one source; they were written by Frederick Cort, who was Gladstone's attorney in Demerara. Shortly before the slave insurrection of 1823, Gladstone pressed Cort for information on the condition of the slaves on Success and other plantations in the colony. Cort wrote back that it was seldom necessary to punish the slaves, that they could make considerable money by selling the surplus produce of their provision grounds, and that they were generally happy and contented. Subsequent to the revolt, the secretary of the London Missionary Society tried to warn Gladstone that he had been deceived by Cort, but Gladstone continued to identify himself with Cort and his other agents (Checkland 1971).

A GLADSTONE VISITS DEMERARA, 1828: MISMANAGEMENT AND NEGLECT REVEALED

John Gladstone never set foot on the soils of Demerara and Jamaica; Frederick Cort, his attorney in Demerara, was the principal source of Gladstone's information from Demerara. Robertson, his second son and future partner, proposed in 1828 that he visit the West Indies and inspect the estates and help to determine whether or not to retain Cort in his powerful position. Robertson stayed in Demerara three-and-a-half months from November 22, 1828 to March 3, 1829. "Cort was found to be an idler and a deceiver. One estate after another had been mismanaged, both those owned by Gladstone and those he administered for others."¹⁶ He was said to have never made plantership a study and had neglected the welfare of the slaves. Robertson was astonished that Cort could have contrived to keep up his connection with John Gladstone. According to Checkland (1971:199),

Cort had succumbed to the temptations of a life in which the degrading relations of a slave society, the petty politics and even pettier jealousies of the colony, the struggles over mortgages and foreclosures and the lack of any supervision of himself had induced habits of idleness and specious self-justification.

Cort was summarily dismissed and replaced by John MacLean, the long-time manager of Vreedenhooop estate.

At least two examples of Cort's callous attitude toward the slaves and his mismanagement of the Gladstone estates are extant in the Gladstones's family records. Cort wrote to John Gladstone on September 6, 1828 that there had

16. FRO, letter from Robertson Gladstone to John Gladstone, dated Philadelphia, May 17, 1829, Glynne-Gladstone MSS.

been "a sad continuance of sickness at Success last month, but the mortality has been confined to useless Invalids and two children."¹⁷

In looking over the journal for Success estate for the greater part of the year 1828, Robertson Gladstone discovered that nearly three-fourths of the deaths were brought on and occasioned by dysentery. When he spoke to Cort about his finding, "he did not at the time evidently at all relish my investigation of the matter."¹⁸ Cort, however, accompanied Gladstone to the trench from which the slaves took their drinking and cooking water which was "very thickly impregnated with earthy and vegetable matter,"¹⁹ which Gladstone was led to believe was the cause of so many cases of dysentery. It was pointed out that, by contrast, the slaves at Vreedenhoop estate obtained their water from a large tank that collected rainwater and that the incidence of deaths from dysentery was minimal. Gladstone concluded that it was a well-known fact that nothing produced dysentery more effectually than bad water. Cort was said "to have a sort of feeling of regret, that the matter was not looked into sooner, but unfortunately his repentance came rather late."²⁰

Although Robertson Gladstone was diligent in his inspection of his father's plantations and slaves in Demerara, he formed a view of the condition of the slaves that conformed closely to that of Frederick Cort and other plantation attorneys and managers. Gladstone wrote in his journal in 1829 that the slaves enjoyed every comfort and they were "contented and happy, and will remain so, if allowed to live undisturbed by the meddling and ill disposed" (Robertson Gladstone, quoted in Checkland 1971:200). Finding this viewpoint disturbing, Checkland (1971:200) asked the following questions: "Was Robertson hoodwinked by the attorney and managers, were his observations superficial, was he the victim of preconception, was he seeking to please his father, or is it possible that the life of the negro had been misrepresented by the abolitionists?" While all of these explanations are plausible, the most likely one is that Robertson was hoodwinked by the attorney and managers. Absentee proprietors or their agents who went to the West Indies on inspection tours were generally the guests of the attorneys or managers in the great house, where they were cared for by household and skilled slaves who were on their best behavior, displaying a cheerful and affectionate demeanor under a mild discipline. The field slaves, on the other hand, were less approachable

17. FRO, letter from Frederick Cort to John Gladstone, September 6, 1828, John Gladstone MSS CH55, Glynne-Gladstone MSS.

18. FRO, letter from Robertson Gladstone to John Gladstone, dated Plantation Vreedenhoop, Demerara, January 11, 1829, Glynne-Gladstone MSS, CH79.

19. FRO, letter from Robertson Gladstone to John Gladstone, dated Plantation Vreedenhoop, Demerara, January 11, 1829, Glynne-Gladstone MSS, CH79.

20. FRO, letter from Robertson Gladstone to John Gladstone, dated Plantation Vreedenhoop, Demerara, January 11, 1829, Glynne-Gladstone MSS, CH79.

and less likely to communicate their grievances to the visitor for fear of severe punishment after the visitor's departure. The myth of the happy and contented slave was thus perpetuated in the metropolis by the limited and distorted views regarding the condition of the slaves.

After replacing Frederick Cort as John Gladstone's attorney in Demerara, John MacLean claimed that he had fully conformed to Gladstone's instructions. "I am most particular," he wrote, "as to punishments, food and clothing, and attention to the slaves when sick" (McLean, quoted in Checkland 1971:265). But he was resistant to certain aspects of Gladstone's concern for slave welfare, and innovations in the technology of sugar manufacture. Intimating that he had superior knowledge of the "Negro character," MacLean warned Gladstone that the granting of indulgences to the slaves would be construed as obligations to which they were entitled and "produce an ungrateful and discontented feeling" (McLean, quoted in Checkland 1971:265). Together with other West Indian planters and their attorneys and managers, MacLean resisted the British government's attempt to enforce a stronger amelioration policy that was mandated by the consolidated Order-in-Council of November 2, 1831.

One thing that John MacLean had in common with Frederick Cort was his lack of remorse when slaves who died had been unable to perform plantation labor. MacLean wrote to John Gladstone on October 21, 1828, "The Negroes are generally in good health but we have lost two this Month who however were completely worn out with age and incurable disease and cannot be considered a loss to the estate."²¹

Another letter from John MacLean to Robertson Gladstone said that

the Slaves on Vreeden Hoop have unfortunately decreased for the last nine months, but the diminution is only Numerical – not one prime or healthy Negro has been lost and the efficient Strength of the Gang has not been in the least affected. If the present appearance of the people continues to a favourable result, it is more than probably that the Gang will increase.²²

When it came to saving working slaves whose lives were threatened with epidemic disease, MacLean was eager to take advantage of preventive medicine. He wrote to Robertson Gladstone at Glasgow, Scotland, on June 16, 1831:

I am glad to find that you intend sending out a supply of Vaccine Matter regularly – it may be the means of saving many lives – It appears by Letters

21. FRO, letter from John MacLean to John Gladstone, dated Plantation Vreedenhoop, Demerara, October 21, 1828, Glynne-Gladstone MSS, CH551.

22. FRO, letter from John MacLean to Robertson Gladstone, March 25, 1829, Glynne-Gladstone MSS, CH20.

received in the colony that the Small Pox was raging in Glasgow in the beginning of May – the Vessels from the Clyde [River] may bring it here.²³

OPPOSITION TO COLONIAL SLAVERY: 1823-33

The issue of slave mortality rates and health on the plantations in Demerara proved to be only one of many concerns that faced plantation owners in the region. Gladstone's great possessions of ships, slaves, and plantations made him vulnerable to criticism, especially by men in high political office and other leadership posts. The decade from 1823 to 1833 was fraught with struggle and conflict in Demerara. Planters were confronted with competition from growers of tropical and semi-tropical staples in Brazil, Cuba, and the American South. As chronic debtors, they struggled to meet the demands of creditors in the colony and in Britain, who were chiefly merchants and shipowners. Opposition to the colonial slave system came from humanitarians and abolitionists in Britain and missionaries in the colony. Slave unrest and rebellion were said to be heightened by the missionaries who preached sermons that criticized the planters and their agents for their harsh treatment, and gave assurance of freedom from bondage. Westminster Parliamentarians from constituencies with large numbers of nonconformist and abolitionist voters were prone to support measures for the amelioration and abolition of slavery. Rather than the destruction of property and race war, men of probity who were concerned with the welfare of the slaves as well as the pecuniary interest of the slave owners sought peaceful change in the transition from slavery to freedom (Mathieson 1926:226-31; Williams 1970).

LORD HOWICK: MALTREATMENT ON PLANTATIONS AND A PLEA FOR ABOLITION

One of the most ardent abolitionist leaders was Henry George Grey, Lord Howick, the twenty-nine-year-old son of Lord Grey, the Prime Minister. Lord Howick was both a Member of Parliament and Under Secretary for the Colonies. He wrote in December 1832 that the great problem to be solved was to draw up a plan for the emancipation of the slaves which would "induce them when relieved from the fear of the driver and his whip, to undergo the regular and continuous labour which is indispensable in carrying on the production of sugar."²⁴

23. FRO, letter from John MacLean to Robertson Gladstone at Glasgow, Scotland, dated Demerara, June 16, 1831, Glynne-Gladstone MSS, CH20.

24. *Parliamentary Debates*, Hansard, Third Series, Vol. XVIII, London, 1833:1231, 1238-39 (hereafter *Parliamentary Debates*).

On May 14, 1833, Lord Howick made a two-hour speech in the House of Commons in which he attacked a plan by another member for the emancipation of the slaves in the West Indies and Guiana and solicited support for his own plan. In broad outline, his plan was to set the slaves free and lend the sum of £15,000,000 as compensation to the slave owners.²⁵

Lord Howick devoted a large part of his speech to the colony of Demerara and its slaves, slave-owners, managers, and absentee proprietors. From the records of the Protector of the Slaves he discovered that there had been an "extraordinary increase both in the number and in the severity of punishments, and that three-fourths of these punishments had been inflicted in consequence of difficulties with respect to the performance of work, that is, for 'bad work.'" The Protector also stated that "while the amount of punishment is thus increasing, the effect produced is daily diminishing, and there is a growing difficulty in compelling the negroes to work." Furthermore, he asserted that "in no colony is the mortality among the slave population so great as in Demerara."²⁶

At a later point in his address, Lord Howick proceeded to show how the decrease in the slave population in Demerara was caused by the over-exaction of labor from the slaves. He investigated the statistics of the estates that were entirely or partially cultivated in sugar. He found that in the year 1829 there were 47,456 slaves on these estates and that in this number the excess of males was 2,344, or rather less than 5 percent. "Among these slaves," he said, "in three years to May 1832, there were 2,828 births, or five and six-tenths per cent. The deaths were 5,573, or eleven and one-tenth per cent, making a decrease in the time I have mentioned of 2,745, or five and five-tenths per cent."²⁷

Lord Howick turned next to the records of twenty-six sugar estates where there had been "a loss varying from one or two in the whole number to no less than a seventh of the population." He said that on Vreedenhoop, "the estate belonging to Mr. Gladstone," in the two years from the close of 1829 to the close of 1831, there had been a loss of forty-six slaves. "The average number of slaves was 516, the average sugar production was 1,009,916 lbs., or for each negro 1,955 lbs; and the decrease of population in two years was forty-six, or nearly four and a-half per cent per annum." Lord Howick said that in the years 1829, 1830, and 1831, a large crop had been produced, to the great advantage of the owner of Vreedenhoop, "but, unhappily, at the price of a dreadful loss of life amongst the slaves."²⁸

25. *Parliamentary Debates* 1833:1249.

26. *Parliamentary Debates* 1833:1250-51.

27. *Parliamentary Debates* 1833:151-54.

28. *Parliamentary Debates* 1833:1249.

According to Rivière, Lord Howick charged MacLean with systematically working the slaves to death in the interest of a high sugar output. Lord Howick attributed the heavy loss of life on sugar plantations, especially in Demerara, to the large number of absentee proprietors whose plantations were managed by persons who had no permanent interest in them. He did not believe that overseers and attorneys were by nature more cruel or less averse to inflicting unnecessary pain on their fellow-creatures than other men. The root of the problem was the great competition among these overseers and attorneys for employment.

They found by experience that the owners at a distance are better acquainted with the result of their management, as to the profit produced, than as to the comfort and welfare of the negroes; and the consequence is, that among persons in this situation in life, the object of emulation is, who shall produce the largest crops at the smallest expense (Rivière 1968:290).

As expected, John Gladstone and his four sons were outraged by the charges levied against them by Lord Howick. Two of these sons, Thomas and William Ewart, sat with their father in the House of Commons. William made his maiden speech in defense of his father. He claimed that the state of things at Vreedenhoop estate was no worse than on other properties. The numerous slave deaths were owing to the large importation of Africans into Demerara immediately previous to the abolition of the slave trade in 1807. Moreover, when the estate of Vreedenhoop came into his father's possession in the mid-1820s, out of 550 slaves, no less than 140 were aged and infirm persons. The future prime minister confessed with shame and pain that cases of cruelty had existed, and he declared that the British legislature and public should extinguish slavery in the colonies.

He admitted, too, that we had not fulfilled our Christian obligations by communicating the inestimable benefits of our religion to the slaves in our colonies, and that the belief among the early English planters, that if you made a man a Christian you could not keep him a slave, had led them to the monstrous conclusion that they ought not to impart Christianity to their slaves.²⁹

Another critic of the absentee proprietors and their colonial agents was Sir Benjamin D'Urban, Lieutenant Governor of Essequibo and Demerara, who took up his office in 1824. He wrote to Earl Bathurst, Secretary of State for the Colonies, on September 30, 1824, a year after the slave rebellion had been quelled. D'Urban believed that the slaves no longer expected their freedom, but were sullen, discontented, and impatient of their condition. Much of this attitude was kept alive and in irritation "by the injudicious managers under whom too many of the slaves are placed; half educated men of little discre-

29. John Henry Barrow (ed.), *The Mirror of Parliament*, Vol. II, June 3, 1833, p. 2079.

tion, or command over their own caprices; good planters perhaps – but quite unfit to have the charge of bodies of men, although they might take very proper care of cattle” (D’Urban, quoted in Williams 1952:188-89). At times these men were frightened at the recollection of the recent slave rebellion, and at other times they were unreasonably violent and harsh. D’Urban thought that the greatest evil he had to contend with was “the general absence of proprietors, rendered still more pernicious by the careless or injudicious selection which they make of their managers” (quoted in Williams 1952:188-89).

Douglas Hall, an economic historian of the Caribbean region, published an article on absentee-proprietorship in 1964. He wrote that there is hardly a commentator or a historian of the British West Indies who did not point to absentee-proprietorship as a major source of the distresses of these colonies in the nineteenth century or earlier. These commentators and historians maintained that, as a result of absentee-proprietorship, the colonies were drained of economic wealth, denied a gentry who might have set a high example in social and political life, that many plantations were left to the management of men who were to a large extent incompetent and often dishonest, and that many of the absentee-proprietors in Britain squandered their fortunes in vulgar display.

THE REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ABSENTEE PROPRIETOR

The general living conditions and social fabric of British Guiana were addressed by the resident physician and surgeon, Henry G. Dalton. Dalton was a Member of the Royal College of Surgeons, London; Corresponding Member of the Academy of Natural Sciences, Philadelphia; and a member of other professional societies. He was also the author of the two-volume *History of British Guiana*, which includes a general description of the colony, a narrative of some of the principal events in the colony’s history, and an account of the climate, geology, staple products, and natural history.

Dalton wrote not only of the slaves who performed the arduous labor on the plantations, but also of the overseers, managers, and attorneys who directed their labor on the estates of resident and absentee proprietors. He said that a large proportion of the immigrants from Europe in British Guiana were born and raised in Scotland. For the most part, they were “of humble extraction, uneducated, and glad to accept of any opening that presented itself; they exemplified the well-known caution and parsimony of their race, and, from the humblest, gradually rose to fill some of the highest situations” (Dalton 1855:306-7). While they were more successful in business than the immigrants from England and Ireland, they also encountered greater reverses.

While luxury and comfort were commonly enjoyed by the owner or agent of a large estate in Guiana, the young man who was still on the first step of the lad-

der of plantation management was said to have had a weary and troublesome ascent before him. Having left a home of civilization in Europe, he commenced life in Guiana as an overseer, which Dalton (1855:330) described as "a kind of superintendent of the allotted work of the slaves." He arose at dawn on week-days and followed his gang of laborers to their place of toil on the plantation. "[E]xposed to the burning sun or temptuous rain, he remained for hours in the open air, encouraging the active, stimulating the lazy, and subduing the refractory. His arm of power was the whip, either plied by himself or by a headman" (Dalton 1855:330).

At the end of the day the young man was worn out with fatigue. Returning at a late hour to "recruit exhausted nature," he threw himself into his hammock or cot. "It was no wonder," remarked Dalton (1855:330), "that the monotony of the day's occupation was too often varied by the excitement of the night's carousal, which often renewed, laid the seeds of future disease, or hurried him to an untimely grave."

Owing to the unsettled conditions in Guiana, few women from Europe ventured into the colony, and those who did come were not persons whose education or moral habits had a beneficial influence on the menfolk. Unrestrained by the presence of refined and virtuous women, having no scandal or public opinion to encounter, and being wholly liberated from all religious and social obligations, the colonials

formed intimate relations with the humblest of their slaves, beginning, perhaps, with some vague sense of personal responsibility, but gradually breaking down all the barriers of honor or decency, until the whole country presented a scene of demoralisation that would scarcely be credited in the present age (Dalton 1855:173-74).

Dalton said that the mother and her mulatto offspring were frequently made free by purchase, and the children brought up to some trade or business. In other cases, the children "were still accounted slaves, and were often compelled to labour in the field, without being allowed to derive any advantage from their European descent" (Dalton 1855:174).

Added to the profligate habits of the colonials was their excessive consumption of alcohol. This form of dissipation was not regarded as a vice or as prejudicial to health among the overseers, but rather as a proof of thorough colonization (Dalton 1855).

BIRTH AND DEATH RATES OF GLADSTONE'S SLAVE LABOR FORCE

Dalton's account of the dissipative habits of the colonials shed some light on the difficulties encountered by the slaves in the region. Another source of information was provided by James Robertson, the Registrar of Slaves for the Colony

of Demerara-Essequibo from 1817 to 1834. He carefully tabulated and analyzed the data on the slave population in published reports that are valuable for modern historians and demographers. However, the categories and the intervals employed in these reports are somewhat erratic (Higman 1984:9-10). In his article, "A Life Table for a West Indian Slave Population," published in 1952, George W. Roberts has used Robertson's tabulations to construct a life table for Demerara for the period 1820-32. Roberts concludes in his article that

extremely high mortality was experienced by the slave population. The average length of life is under 23 years, and one-half of the original cohort are dead by age 15. Mortality over age 30 is particularly severe. This heavy mortality, it should be emphasized, was not the result of any unusual epidemic but was fully representative of slave conditions. Moreover, the years 1820-32 covered probably the healthiest period of the slave regime, as ameliorating laws were passed in 1825. (Roberts 1952:243)

Gladstone's labor force comprised men, women, children, and invalids. At Vreedenhoop estate there were a total of 562 slaves in November 1828 consisting of 217 men, 189 women, 66 boys, and 90 girls. There was a decline of ninety slaves on this estate from November 1828 to June 1832, a period of three-and-a-half years. For the period of enumeration for purposes of compensation, the slaves on Vreedenhoop estate declined from 472 to 416, a total of 56, from May 31, 1832 to August 1, 1834. Slave deaths rose irregularly to a high point of twenty-three in the age range of thirty-one to forty, which, together with higher age ranges, were made up largely of slaves who were born in Africa. Though the mortality was heavy, the fact that the deaths were spaced rather evenly suggests that there were no unusual epidemics. Moreover, it can be shown that male slaves on Vreedenhoop estate suffered a higher mortality rate than that of females.

During the weeks following enactment of the Emancipation Bill to abolish slavery in the British colonies on August 1, 1834, the planters or their attorneys submitted a "Claim to be Awarded for Slaves" on each property to the Registrar of Slaves for the District of Demerara and Essequibo, British Guiana. The compensation claims for John Gladstone's four estates included 139 children under six years of age who were freed and 47 invalids (Checkland 1971:320, see also 414-15). The claims for the slaves amounted to £22,440.19.7 for Vreedenhoop; £22,271.15.5 for Success; £14,719.9.9 for Wales; and £10,276.18.7 for Vreedestein: total £ 69,709.3.6. Data from the four claims, together with calculations based upon the claims, are shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Decrease of Slaves on the Sugar Estates of Gladstone in Demerara, 1832-34³⁰

Name of Estate	Number of Slaves May 31, 1832	Increase by Birth	Decrease by Death	Net Decrease	Percentage Decrease	Number of Slaves Aug 1, 1834
Vreedenhoop	472	20	76	56	11.9	416
Success	444	25	40	15	3.4	429
Wales	289	6	23	17	5.9	272
Vreedestein	209	7	23	16	7.7	193
Totals	1,414	58	162	104	7.4	1,310

Gladstone was compensated by Act of Parliament in 1837 in the amount of £84,718 for 1,590 slaves in the colony of Demerara, and to the amount of £8,808 for 449 slaves in Jamaica. The total number emancipated was 2,039, and the compensation £93,526. In addition, some 190 children under six years of age were set free. Gladstone's total West Indian property in 1833 amounted to approximately £336,000, which was one-half of his total wealth (Checkland 1971).

The data collected and compiled by Registrar Robertson supply aggregate data for the slave population of Demerara-Essequibo at intervals of three years from 1817 to 1832. Deaths exceeded births on a colony-wide basis throughout this time period, ranging from 1,017 in 1829 to 3,140 in 1826. When the total population of 65,517 for May 31, 1832 is divided into 2,930, which was the excess of deaths over births, the percentage of deaths per annum is 4.3. Comparing this percentage with that of the Gladstone plantations, as shown in Table 1, we see that on an annual basis, or one-half of the percentage decreases shown in the table, the estates of Success, Wales, and Vreedestein were below the colony level, whereas that of Vreedenhoop was somewhat higher, about 6.0.

SUGAR PRODUCTION AFTER SLAVERY: THE EXPERIMENT WITH INDENTURED LABORERS FROM INDIA

The end of slavery in Demerara did not bring an end to the Gladstone family's participation in the plantation economy and society of the colony. John Gladstone and his partners and son decided to conform to the new laws and continue the production of sugar with the same labor force whose legal status was changed from slave to apprentice for a period of four years. The apprentices were to be released from the disabilities formerly imposed upon

30. FRO, "Claims for the Compensation to be awarded to Sir John Gladstone for his Slaves who were to be Emancipated. Papers relating to the estates and business interests of Sir John Gladstone," Glynne Gladstone MSS.

them as slaves. They were to work for their former owners three-fourths of the day in return for food, clothing, and lodging. The remaining hours were at their own disposal, including work on the plantations at a fixed rate of wages (Mathieson 1967:233-35). Special provision was made for the apprentices to purchase their freedom. Special Magistrates were appointed in Great Britain to go to the colonies to administer the laws governing the treatment of the apprentices under the practical working of the new system (Augier *et al.* 1960:174-78).

John Gladstone embarked on a scheme to recruit and transport Indian laborers from Bengal to work on his and other plantations in Demerara. He learned from his attorney in Demerara that the liberated slaves were not easy to handle, and he feared that they would refuse to work on the estates when their apprenticeship ended. On the other hand, the reputed cheapness and tractability of Bengali laborers was an incentive to go forward with the scheme. After lobbying the government to approve his plan, Gladstone formed a partnership with John Moss, his friend and fellow absentee planter, and they hired Messrs. Gillanders, Arbuthnot & Co., to transport the Indians from Calcutta to Georgetown, Demerara (Checkland 1971).

Isaac Dookhan, who was descended from a family of Indians who came to Demerara, became a leading historian of the Caribbean region. In his article, "The Gladstone Experiment," he says that on May 31, 1843, after the end of the indenture period, 414 Indians had been embarked at Calcutta on ships commissioned by the firm of Gladstone and Moss, of whom eighteen had died, leaving 396. Another report of 1839, which was drawn up in British Guiana, shows that six plantations were supplied with 412 British Indians, consisting of 380 men, 14 women, and 18 children. Gladstone's Vreedenhoop plantation was supplied with 64 men, 3 women, and 3 children, total 70; and Vreedestein with 31 men and no women and children. Dookhan (1976-77:634-35) writes that

while workers were free from the restraints of slavery, the employers found it difficult to develop more humane means of treatment compatible with that freedom. Rather, they continued to apply or sanction the means of coercion common to slavery, and in this regard the Indians fared no better than the ex-slaves.

Their maltreatment was brought to public attention through the medium of the anti-slavery newspaper, the *British Emancipator*, which reported on January 9, 1839, "several attempts by gangs of Indians to run away from Bellevue and Vreed-en-hoop, as a result of ill treatment" (Dookhan 1976-77:635).

By February of 1840, John Gladstone was debating whether or not to continue his investment in Demerara. The British Indian workers on Vreedenhoop suffered greatly from disease and twelve had died. After he discovered

a loss on current account of £5,000 on Vreedenhoop, he sold the estate for £53,000. Success estate was also disposed of. By 1849 Gladstone's only financial interest in Demerara was a mortgage of £18,000 on Wales estate. Though the Gladstone experiment in British Guiana with British Indian laborers was largely a failure, the continuous exodus of ex-slaves from the plantations after the termination of their apprenticeship on August 1, 1838, led to the revival of Indian immigration to the Caribbean (Dookhan 1976-77; Checkland 1954, 1971).

RECAPITULATION

Gladstone's experience as a plantation owner in Guiana reflects much of the history of the region prior to and following the Emancipation Bill of 1834. Together with Essequibo and Berbice, the colony of Demerara became British Guiana in 1831. It was the only British colony on the continent of South America. The colony was part of a region that had a strange physical environment. It was a land of heavy rainfall and numerous great rivers. The coastal lands which consisted mainly of fertile clays was originally a swamp which was reclaimed under the direction of the Dutch at great cost with the labor of African slaves and their descendants and converted to irrigated sugar cane and rice lands. This cultivated land lay mostly below sea level and needed the protection of a sea wall, and also a back dam to prevent flooding with fresh water from the mighty rivers of the Amazon, Negro, and Orinoco basins. In 1746 the Dutch governor of Demerara, Essequibo, and Berbice threw open the region to settlement. Included among the settlers were planters from the neighboring British Caribbean islands who later became more numerous than the Dutch. These colonies were captured and re-captured during the American Revolution and Napoleonic Wars until in 1814 they were ceded to Great Britain.

Absent from this article has been a discussion of the impact of racism and the desire for profits upon people from Africa and their descendants in Demerara. Racism can be defined as a mechanism of control of oppressed groups that justifies the low reward for productive labor. Anya Jabour has supplied evidence from Trinidad, Berbice, and Demerara-Essequibo during the period of amelioration that racism and the desire for profits were a deadly mix for Caribbean and Guianese slaves (Sheridan 1985). She writes that

a new and hostile disease environment, coupled with extreme work loads and inadequate diet, put enslaved Africans and their descendants in the New World in a precarious position. The situation was compounded by miserliness and racism, which induced slaveowners, doctors, and even

slaves' advocates to overlook evidence of slave malnutrition and illness. Slaves were punished for complaining of poor health, exhibiting signs of illness and malnutrition, and for attempting to augment the scanty official care given them. As a result, proposed measures for improving slave health and achieving natural increase were ineffective. Racism and profit-seeking were key elements in the demographic debacle of Caribbean slavery. (Jabour 1994:17)

John Gladstone was a traveling merchant, shipowner, shipper, trader, and Liverpool merchant prince and Member of Parliament prior to 1816, when he became the full owner of a slave-sugar plantation in Demerara. While he had experience as a supplier of plantation inputs and the marketing of tropical commodities, Gladstone lacked experience with the ownership and management of chattel slaves in the sugar colonies. We have seen that, in a letter from an official of the London Missionary Society, of January 11, 1824, John Gladstone was informed that events in Demerara had shown how little a non-resident proprietor could control the actions of his agents in the colony. This communication, together with information critical of Gladstone's plantation attorney in Demerara, should have been received as a warning to take prompt corrective action, but Gladstone delayed more than four years before sending his son Robertson to inspect his properties, dismiss his attorney, and replace him with the manager of one of his estates.

The condition of the slaves on the Gladstone sugar plantations in Demerara in the period of this study was such that the deaths exceeded the births as a result of hard labor, severe punishment, a hostile disease environment, imbalance of the sexes, an ageing population, sexual exploitation, racism, and the desire for profits. The older generation of bondsmen and bondswomen were born in West Africa and had survived numerous hazards to their lives, including capture, the voyage to the colony, seasoning, and life as an agricultural laborer. Others who were born in the colony were vulnerable to the hazards of childbirth and care by mothers who were part-time field hands. Both groups were vulnerable to exposure to the elements, disease, poor nutrition, and forced labor. Contributing to the life of unceasing toil and deprivation was the system of management whereby numbers of West Indian proprietors became absentees, leaving their slave plantations under the care of agents who were more concerned with the production of large crops of sugar than the health and welfare of the slaves.

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STEPHEN KINGSLEY SCOTT

THROUGH THE DIAMETER OF RESPECTABILITY:
THE POLITICS OF HISTORICAL REPRESENTATION IN
POSTEMANCIPATION COLONIAL TRINIDAD

INTRODUCTION

There was a masquerade popular in Port-of-Spain, Trinidad, in the Carnival of the late nineteenth century – the “Dame Lorine.”¹ It depicted the transmogrification of a house-slave on the plantation, the butler, into a refined gentleman of the postemancipation period: a schoolmaster, ornate with a long frock coat and colossal attendance book. In parallel fashion, the masters of the plantation were transformed into the butler’s pupils in the schoolhouse. The masquerade was divided into two acts. The first, set at the balls of the planter elite in the time of slavery, is given account by David Crowley:

a very elegant grand march of people dressed in the costumes of the French aristocracy of the 18th century. A haughty butler announced the mouth-filling names of each couple as they entered the stage. A stately dance was then performed, and a slave was seen peeping in the window, looking on in amazement. (quoted in Alonso 1990:106)

The second act transported the actors to the postemancipation period, to the Creole society of the late colonial period, a temporality coeval with the Carnival masquerade. Here, the transformed butler qua refined schoolmaster calls the roll in a mock classroom and bullies his pupils with a whip to dance in respectable fashion, instructing, “Dance, my children dance. Leg to leg but no vulgarity. Let’s get on, let’s get on. Listen! Do like brother and sister but not like man and women” (Hill, quoted in Alonso 1990:106). Errol Hill gives the following description of the schoolmaster’s students:

1. Alonso’s work (1990:106) called my attention to this masquerade, which is variously called “Dame Lorraine.” It is in her work that a composite is presented of Crowley’s and Hill’s accounts of the skit.

dressed in old garments, [they] were a burlesque imitation of the aristocracy. They were all masked, and inversion of the sexes was a common practice. Each pupil had a prominent physical protuberance which accounted for his name, ... M'sieur Gros Coco, M'sieur Gros Boudin, Mme. Gros Tete, Mlle. Jolle Fougé. (Hill, quoted in Alonso 1990:106)

This masquerade foregrounds the two broad levels I relate in this paper: on the one hand, the history of Trinidad in the period immediately following emancipation, 1834 to roughly the end of the nineteenth century; on the other hand, the *multiple* and *perspectival representations* of this history in the same period. We will see how these two levels were related through the creation and transformation of social values, identities, and cultural concepts. The two cultural concepts I focus on, which should no doubt be familiar to the Caribbeanist, are "respectability" and "reputation." Building from the substantial literature on these concepts, I examine respectability and reputation in their capacity as highly productive representations of historical process – to borrow a set of terms from Richard J. Parmentier (1985) – as "signs of history" and "signs in history." The matter to hand pertains to their emergent functions in the colonial politics of postemancipation Trinidad, a politics coalescing around local imaginings of the transhistoric consequences of slavery for the project of transforming a collapsed plantation complex into a class-based Creole society. I will call this the "diameter of respectability" so as to distinguish the emergent functions that respectability and reputation came to play in Trinidad in this period from the greater description and provenance of these concepts discussed in Caribbeanist literature.

There are two sections to this paper, each addressing (roughly) a moment of "historical imagination" (Comaroff & Comaroff 1992) in Trinidad, describable in terms of a different play of *represented* diachronic process from the same identified baseline – the time of slavery, the act of emancipation. The emergent functions that the two cultural categories identified above obtained in postemancipation Trinidad will be analyzed in and through these historical imaginings. My thesis is that to understand the social use of these concepts, one needs to understand the dynamic by which each presupposed and entailed a different representation and valuation of local historical process. First, the emergence of class structure and social distinction in Trinidad after emancipation, centered on and around the concept of respectability, is figured as a refinement or self-advancement over time of certain upwardly mobile social identities and their respective emblematics. I show how the diameter of respectability needs to be related to the emergence of an educated colored and black *petite bourgeoisie* on the island and the way this class represented its own history, as diachronic progress from humble origins. We will see how this trope worked more specifically by analyzing the social life of one man, J.J. Thomas. The house-slave qua schoolmaster in the Dame Lorine masquerade traces this development.

Second, there is the burgeoning of a large urban black underclass on the island, and the subsequent revival of the island's Carnival by the underclass toward the end of the nineteenth century. Filling out the barrack yards of Port-of-Spain and San Fernando, these characters became known as the *jamenttes* because they were, to Trinidad's more "refined" sensibilities, below the diameter of respectability – *jamentte* being a creolization of the French word *diamètre*, or diameter (Pearse 1956:188). Carnival, for the *jamenttes*, was a yearly descent into the "underworld," where a set of values diametrically opposed to the norms of respectability were conjured – what were called "reputations." This development is captured by Dame Lorine not so much in the world depicted by the masquerade, but in the contemporaneous world in which the masquerade, and its representations of diachronic process on the island, is situated.

Before turning to this, however, I review the literature on respectability and reputation in the Caribbean and make some remarks regarding the theoretical tow of the paper, how we might begin to view these concepts as ethno-historical imaginings of diachronic process. I should note that while this paper does address the second moment of historical imagination, reputations, my primary concern is however with first moment, considering reputations only insofar as it engaged the diameter of respectability. Thus discussion of reputations here will only be schematic.

RESPECTABILITY AND REPUTATION

Respectability and reputation were first suggested by Peter Wilson (1969) as a framework for linking domestic organization to broader social organization, in which an analytic distinction between male-centered values of reputation and female-centered values of respectability articulates the expanding social world through a sexualized duality. This duality has since become commonplace in the ethnography of the contemporary Caribbean, approximating a "master-trope" for Caribbean anthropology (Trouillot 1992). As a complex of dichotomous norms, values, and morals, the duality has been elaborated in subsequent literature in a variety of interesting ways, across a range of topics, including: personality (Abrahams 1979); sociolinguistics (Abrahams 1983); the cultural construction of time (Miller 1994); style (Leiber 1976; Eriksen 1990); independence and nation-state formation (Van Koningsbruggen 1997); mass consumption, modernity, and the development of capitalism in the Caribbean (Miller 1994).

To summarize the literature (though by no means doing it justice), respectability pertains to the values of an external system, of formal institutions such as "legal society." Reputation, on the other hand, approximates the values of an internal system of informal interactions and relations that better fall

within the subcommunity (Wilson 1969). Respectability represents "proper behavior, status-seeking good behavior that demonstrates order, propriety, and various other virtues ... [it] is the overt value system of the community, subscribed by all when they give testimony to what is good and proper" (Abrahams 1979:448). Value is put on "respectable talk" which emphasizes "continuity, decorum, and social place, and ... outward manifestations ... [that] have a high-toned British cast to them" (Abrahams 1979:448). Respectability involves "acting sensible" and "talking sweet" (Abrahams 1979:450). It is behavior befitting the household, the workplace, the courthouse; behavior that is disciplined, routinized, rationalized, prudent, prudish, precious, painstaking, serious, and obedient. Respectability belongs to the female domain and is imposed upon the wife and, in corollary, the marriage contract (Wilson 1969). In contemporary Trinidad and St. Vincent, respectability has been identified with the sobriety of Christmas, with its emphasis on family (and the consumption of family-oriented items), tradition, and communalism – this in contrast to the festivities of Carnival, where individualism, freedom, and bacchanal (generally, the values of reputation) motivate revelers (Miller 1994).

Reputation, broadly, is "associated with male, friendship-oriented values, in which life at the rum shop and other public places is pursued and valued ... a deployment of resources with friends rather than family ... with masculine 'flash,' big- and loud-talk, and sometimes drunken unruliness" (Abrahams 1979:448). Reputation is symbolized by the street and crossroads, by licentious behavior, rudeness, talking broad, talking nonsense, boasting, and rhetoric (Abrahams 1979). It is behavior that is irresponsible, unpredictable, though highly stylized. Reputation is what is at issue in "liming" – spontaneous drunken excursions marked by the "art of doing nothing" (Eriksen 1990), "checking out the scene," and "hanging around with eyes and ears keenly tuned to the flow of action and recognition of advantage" (Leiber 1976:327). Reputation is marked off by a man's "virility," as indicated by the fathering of children and giving them one's own name (Wilson 1969). Reputation approximates ideals such as absolute freedom and transcendence, and stands for, in such events as Carnival, the dominance of a rampant individualism over the constraints of proper society (Miller 1994). If respectability is the embodiment of order and obedience before the law and in the domestic sphere, then reputation embodies chaos and transgression. Some schemas have associated respectability with the imposition of foreign values – patently British – during the colonial period, while on the other hand identifying reputation with native values, which are seen as more creole, and in some cases, more African in origin (see Wilson 1969; Van Koningsbruggen 1997) – a point I would contest (see also Olwig 1993).

Wilson's initial exposition of the dichotomy stemmed from ethnographic work in Providencia. Subsequent claims have been made by Wilson and others for the extension of the respectability/reputation framework to the pan-

Caribbean, identifying throughout a “functional equivalence of the moral values ... and their role in social organization” (Wilson 1969:70). The effect, however, has often meant the black-boxing of the local provenance of the concepts – this despite the fact that an important stream of scholarship has shown how the concepts are not exclusive to the study of the contemporary period, nor the exclusive analytic domain of the scholar. Respectability is, for instance, central to Raymond T. Smith’s (1967) work on change and integration in colonial British Guiana. Reputation has been central to historical accounts of *machismo* in the Hispanic-Caribbean (Wilson 1969). Roger Abrahams (1983) has demonstrated how the concepts were historically operative at missionary tea-meetings in colonial St. Vincent, forming a central tension through which participants vied and competed. Working on the island of Nevis, Karen Fog Olwig (1993) traces respectability to middle-class European folk models brought to the Caribbean by Methodist missionaries in the time of slavery; similarly, reputation is traced back to seventeenth-century concepts of “sociability” brought by small farmers from Britain. Olwig demonstrates how these concepts (via their respective social institutions) were successfully appropriated by Nevisians as vehicles for public expression of Afro-Caribbean culture. In the case of colonial Trinidad, much too has been made of the local importance of respectability and reputation (see Powrie 1956; Brereton 1979).

These latter historical studies especially point to a central idea I want to draw on in this paper: the need to view respectability and reputation as native concepts to be examined in their social and historical contexts, as folk models used by social actors to understand, unravel, and regiment their worlds, *their* histories. Abrahams (1979) explicitly alluded to this point in his critique of Wilson’s initial argument, along the lines that, while Wilson “picked up on a real systematic contrast (and often contest of values) ... [to] translate this into social structural terms does violence to the native concepts” (Abrahams 1979:449). Abrahams reprimanded Wilson’s suggestion of extending folk concepts to greater institutional realms, the folk model uncritically becoming the ethnographer’s tool. The challenge posed here, then, is to situate respectability and reputation at the intersection of local history, its representation, and its politic – the politics of historical representation. In what milieu of contested perspectives on the value and meaningfulness of local historical process did the diameter of respectability emerge, operate, and transform in postemancipation Trinidad?

One of the intriguing things about Trinidad in this period is the degree to which the act of emancipation afforded an ideological rupture salient enough to stimulate a lasting dialogue on the nature of social change and historical process, indeed “progress.” Some sectors of the population were imputed to have advanced since slavery; others were seen to have degenerated – in either case, emancipation from the time of slavery was identified as a baseline for

measuring progress. I would argue that we need to examine the respective Trinidadian valorizations of respectability and reputation in this light, as a set of social metrics operative in this politics of diachrony, configured through situated representations of the transformation of social relations on the island in the wake of emancipation – *situated* along the perspectival, ideological fissures of Creole society's emergent structurings of class and social distinction.

In an important study of race ideology among Jamaica's middle class, Jack Alexander (1977) demonstrated how race functions in Kingston as a sign-complex expressing a particular mythical time which, like an historical charter, "establishes the historical rootedness of the society and its members' place in it:"

It does so in a way that locates this historical rootedness directly in the experience of persons' bodies and thus to a certain extent fuses the continuity of the person with the continuity of the society. Every time a person experiences inconsistency among race, physical appearance, status, and class, he is referring the present to a past in which there were two original groups – one English, white, civilized, master, and solidary, the other African, black, uncivilized, slave, and solidary – that mixed without amalgamating. Every time a person perceives himself or someone else in terms of race, he commits himself to a view that sees the present as the result of a long process of mixture in which the two elements are always kept track of because they have never really joined together. (Alexander 1977:432-33)

While my argument regarding race in postemancipation Trinidad departs from Alexander's in significant ways, I would argue that respectability and reputation in Trinidad can be treated more generally along these lines, as historicizing sign-complexes, or ethnohistorical categorizations, involving a play of signs encoding historical or diachronic process.

Parmentier (1985) has suggested that we pay attention to the way signs not only achieve meaningfulness through synchronic systematicity, but also temporally and diachronically, thus arguing that cultural categories, need also to be understood operatively, in their capacities as (ethno)historical functions. He theorizes a dialectic between two classes of historicizing signs – signs in history and signs of history – which function in different ways:

Here the phrase "signs in history" refers to those value-laden objects, expressions, and patterns of actions involved in social life that are loci of historical intentionality. And "signs of history" refers to those mnemonic signs which ... codify events *as* history, that selective discourse about the diachrony of a society. (Parmentier 1985:134)

Signs of history, as objectified arrays of diachronic process (a topography of specified events and their imputed consequences), can refer to and predicate about signs in history, foregrounding their potentials as appropriate and effective sign-vehicles for social action, mediation, and transformation, around

which social actors *ought* to mobilize, that is, for the *making* of history (Parmentier 1985:149).

Thus, following Parmentier and Alexander, we want to see how, in their capacity as schematizations of diachronic process (signs of history), cultural categories like respectability and reputation are generative of social values, identities, and their emblematics, by referring to, foregrounding, and fixing certain objects, expressions, patterns of action, and even persons as sign-vehicles (signs in history) ripe for social action and distinction. As we shall see, such an approach will help us to re-conceptualize the way we understand and relate the respectability/reputation duality to the specific local contexts of its emergence and social use.

THE DIAMETER OF RESPECTABILITY:
THE PROBLEM OF EMANCIPATION AND THE
BRITISH SOLUTION, EDUCATION

Colonial Trinidad, at the beginning of the nineteenth century, promised to be a "great experiment" for the British, with tremendous potentials if successfully exploited: the colony was vast, land was abundant and fertile for plantation work, and the island was strategically located at the base of the lesser Antilles, ideal for monitoring and regulating trade with South America. British magistrates sought financial and political rewards by converting the island into an exemplar of effective governance. This was no simple matter, and, as British administrators came to realize, it necessitated a comprehensive social and political integration, transcending the fragmented plantation complex – where each plantation composed a singular, closed socioeconomic-political unit – by bringing together disparate legal, economic, religious, and cultural elements. For this task, a cohort of British administrators and professionals were dispatched to the island under the guise of crafting, through legislative artifice, an internally coherent Creole society with a sustainable margin of profit (Wood 1968).

Slavery in Trinidad and the rest of the British West Indies was formally abolished on August 1, 1834. However, a compulsory apprenticeship of six years for field slaves and four years for others was required before full manumission. In this period, the administrative invasion of the West Indies redoubled, with British officers and professionals assigned more permanent positions in the islands. As Smith (1967:234) writes, "[a] new body of Europeans appeared in the colonies ... missionaries, stipendiary magistrates, doctors and Colonial Office officials ... whose task it was to 'civilise' the ex-slaves." In these times of radical transition, the Colonial Office well apprehended the benefits of an ordered and integrated colonial society, both to minimize the hazards of emancipation and allay the fears of the local plantocracy. Indeed, fears

of a degenerate class of freed slaves were widespread throughout the Caribbean before and after emancipation, with the example of Haiti and its slave revolt serving as constant reminder of the depths of "barbarism" into which an unchecked ex-slave population might sink. Once emancipated, it was widely held that slaves would succumb to the most base desires, regressing to the heathens they were before the "disciplinary-effects" of slavery. Indolence, laziness, lust, licentiousness, vice, and vagrancy would inundate the island as liberated slaves fled the plantation, taking to the bush or heading to the city to join the ranks of the growing urban underclass (cf. MacQueen 1824; Burnley 1842).

To convey to the British Crown the gravity of the (impending) matter, the *Sterling Report* of May 11, 1835 was dispatched by the Colonial Office within a year of emancipation. The "issues at stake," reported Sterling (quoted in Gordon 1963:21), were manifold, at once the moral fabric of the Empire and the *raison d'être* of the colonies – a profitable, now free, labor:

For although the negroes are now under a system of limited control, which secures to a certain extent their orderly and industrious conduct, in the short space of five years from the first of next August, their performance of the functions of a labouring class in a civilised community will depend entirely on the power over their minds of the same prudential and moral motives which govern more or less the mass of the people here. If they are not so disposed as to fulfill these functions, property will perish in the colonies for lack of human impulsion; the whites will no longer reside there; and the liberated negroes themselves will probably cease to be progressive.

If the *Sterling Report* made palpable the fears of emancipation, it also presented a solution in its injunction to step up the "civilizing mission" in the West Indies. Emancipation, according to the report, was to come in two parts and two times, each via proactive legislation: the emancipation of the physical body from slave labor; the emancipation of the mind from its primitive African origin and the degenerative effects of slavery – a moral and mental "improvement." The latter had only been alluded to in the Emancipation Bill of 1833, in the act's stipulation of mandatory apprenticeship. The *Sterling Report*, with all its dispatch, intended to make occurrent this second meaning of emancipation, refashioning it as the secondary step to civilization, linking this to the imperatives of universal education: "The law having already determined and enforced their civic rights, the task of bettering their condition can be further advanced only by *education*" (*Sterling Report*, quoted in Gordon 1963:21).

The 1847 *Ideas for Curriculum*, for example, illustrated what a proper education might, or ought to entail, essentially in and through industrial and normal schools, both of sectarian and secular design. Circulated by the Colonial Office throughout the British West Indies, the document outlined

four basic tenets, the importance of which would be realized as the century unfolded: religious education; knowledge of the English language; knowledge of economy and "calculation;" and education in the "rational basis" of colonialism (quoted in Gordon 1963:58). As was generally deemed prudent at the time, the dispatch was careful to distinguish a morally-uplifting and practically-minded curriculum befitting ex-slaves – and the "station in life to which they belong" (for Trinidad, see Burnley 1842) – from the academic or society-oriented finishing schools predominant in the metropole (Wood 1969).² The trick was to educate to a certain standard of civilization, but no further. Bridget Brereton (1979:78) explains that in Trinidad, "[a] sound elementary education was one which inculcated the virtues of honest labour. An unsound one was a system which made children despise agricultural labour." The point was not to educate the children of ex-slaves to be Ladies and Gentlemen, but as Governor Robinson remarked, "honest, industrious, self-respectful, and God-fearing gardeners, carpenters, servants, cooks, or housekeepers" (quoted in Wood 1968:78).

How were these prescriptions from the Colonial Office received in Trinidad? Education in the nineteenth-century postemancipation period was regarded as necessary to and the best means by which to impart civilization, but also as a dangerous and necessary evil about which each successive colonial administration worried. But, as Trinidad was a Crown Colony and thus had little legislative autonomy, the influence of the Colonial Office and its prescriptions loomed large, overriding island opinions (and wisdoms). Here, the 1847 *Ideas for Curriculum* somewhat misapprehended the complexities of the colonies, Trinidad in particular, with its emphasis on Christianity and the English language. With its multifaceted colonial legacy, Trinidad's landed elite were historically divided along two lines, linguistic and denominational, the French creole elite preferring a Catholic education in the French language, English creoles preferring a Protestant and English-language-based education (Wood 1969). This division would continually plague efforts in Trinidad to universalize education and make good on the *Sterling Report* (and others of its kind) throughout the later half of the nineteenth century.

2. A report to the Colonial Office in 1838, for example, made the following recommendation for educating ex-slaves in the colonies: "it must be a sober education; one rather calculated to discipline the mind, and to bring its opening powers into wholesome subjection, than to excite it; one suited to the necessities and probable prospects of the class to whom it is presented; and above all, an education not merely based on worldly morality, but built on the Holy Scriptures." (Latrobe, quoted in Wood 1968:213) So while ideologies of "achievement" and "egalitarianism" were taking shape in the British West Indies, in which the growing demand for public education played a part, the reality and *practicalities* of ascribed social roles, identities, and classes were still palpable. Everyone had their "proper station," as allotted by God.

In 1850, a system of normal and ward schools – free, public, and paid for by taxes levied on local landowners – was instituted in Trinidad. This ordinance thought to resolve the denominational divisions by rendering the public schools secular; the matter of language, however, was less flexible, and English, as the “most important agent of Civilisation” according to the *Ideas for Curriculum*, was duly implemented (quoted in Gordon 1969:58; Wood 1968). Two years later, a review of this system by the administration of Sir Arthur Gordon (1867-70) found the ward schools lagging in quality and attendance. As the most significant reform of education of that century, Gordon’s 1870 Education Ordinance sought to expand and better the public system by first channeling state aid to the better-equipped (and private) Church schools on condition they admit students on a faith-blind basis. Second, to assuage the impasse between the two contending elite factions, Gordon’s Ordinance installed a clergymen, selected according to the denomination registering the majority in that ward, as overseer in each ward school (Brereton 1979:65). Though a practical and industrially minded primary education remained the norm in Trinidad for the large population of ex-slaves and their descendants, efforts were made throughout the remainder of this century to expand and enroll these students in secondary schools established on the island, mainly in the form of normal schools. (Trinidad’s elite, on the other hand, sent their children abroad, to secondary schools in France and England.) In this milieu, the normal schools – as secondary schools for teachers-to-be – became quite important in Trinidad, being, along with marriage, the most accessible and rapid means for society’s lower caste to attain social status and respect.

Early attempts in Trinidad in this period to establish free, universal education and to impose the English language are important here because it was through these discourses and their resultant policies that the diameter of respectability was given contour. First, as we shall see below, education and the English language – through a circular logic – became the primary means of upward mobility and self-definition for the emergent colored and black *petite bourgeoisie* toward the end of the nineteenth century. Second, both reflected the broader “liberal,” “egalitarian,” and “individualistic” ideologies of the cohort of British emissaries newly resident in the colonies (Smith 1982). Invigorated by the rejuvenated spirit of the Enlightenment and the “civilising-mission,” these men seized upon these ideologies as a “common value-set” for grafting a “Creole society” atop the fragments of the plantation complex. Smith (1967:234) argues that “[t]he only image of ‘civilization’ possessed by these men was that of their own culture, so that the West Indies appeared to be an extension of English society.” In the form of tastes, preferences, manners, dispositions, ways of consuming, ways of governing, and especially the canons of learning, an entire lifestyle – a virtual microcosm of English society – was transposed to the island from the British metropole. Unwitting or not, this common value-set or lifestyle was instrumentalized as

an integrative framework to reconcile extant racialized-social partitionings to an emergent achievement-based modality of status reckoning, one that “stressed the importance of Christianity, of education, respect of the law, ‘good’ as opposed to ‘rough’ or ‘bad’ behavior, the need for moral upliftment, and the importance of using proper language” (Smith 1967:235).

By these measures Trinidad was to be rendered first respectable, with a progressive Creole society (as opposed to degenerate one), and second, profitable as a colony – fulfilling the so-called double mandate of civility and economy. We need to understand this respectability in its early and very British modality, not confusing it with the concept of respectability later operative in Trinidad. Here, respectability was a transposed British concept, circulated to the island by the transient class of English emissaries, those often described as “birds of passage.” As an “essence” of one’s person, this form of respectability was foremost bestowed by birth and worth. In certain cases, like those of the colonies, it might be achieved through one’s adoption or approximation to British dispositions, manners, and habits, understood as a “refinement” to the standards of the British metropole as instantiated by the representative birds of passage. But how did this very British concept of respectability fit more particularly into the local agenda of an emergent *petit bourgeoisie* in Trinidad, one composed of ex-slaves and their descendants? We want to turn now to the profound transformation in meaningfulness and value that respectability underwent in the later half of the nineteenth century, examining the more specific historicizing/historicized potentials that the cultural category obtained in Trinidad’s Creole society. How did this very British notion of respectability, with its complex of values and emblematics, take on (operative) significance locally as both a sign of history and sign in history around which social actors mobilized?

THE REFINEMENT OF THE EMERGENT COLORED AND BLACK “PETITE BOURGEOISIE”

Who could, without seeming to insult the intelligence of men, have predicted on the day of Emancipation that the Negroes then released from the blight and withering influence of ten generations of cruel bondage, so weakened and half-destroyed – so denationalized and demoralized – so despoiled and naked, would be in the position they are now? ... Here in the West Indies ... are to be found Surgeons of the Negro Race, Solicitors, Barristers, Mayors, Councilors, Principals and Founders of High Schools and Colleges, Editors and Proprietors of Newspapers, Archdeacons, Bishops, Judges, and Authors – men who not only teach those immediately around them, but also teach the world ... *The European world is looking with wonder and admiration at the progress made by the Negro Race – a progress unparalleled in the annals of the history of any race* [emphasis mine]. (Rev. Doughlin of Trinidad, quoted in J.J. Thomas 1889)

Within a generation or so following emancipation and the implementation of public education, a substantial black and colored *petite bourgeoisie* resided on the island. As teachers, doctors, pharmacists, journalists, printers, solicitors, barristers, clerks, and especially civil servants, this professional class came to dominate city life in Port-of-Spain and San Fernando (Brereton 1979). Attesting to the efficiency of the British colonial project, the island had never appeared so English. For one, the English language was becoming standard for public affairs; French, Spanish, and the incorrigible French patois were rapidly being displaced. Other than the large population of indentured East Indians (who with their customs and language were conceptually marginalized to the periphery of society and in some sense outside of society [Brereton 1979]), Trinidad was becoming the exemplar British colony in terms of social integration. A bona fide Creole society can be said to have existed.

Members of the emergent middle class came to dominate the island's literary and educational circles, essentially composing the island's public sphere, forming the ritual center of Creole society. School boards, debating societies, prominent literary clubs, Trinidad's journals and newspapers (e.g., the *San Fernando Gazette*, *Trinidad Press*, *Trinidad Colonist*, and the *Telegraph*) – all were owned and operated at the time by members of the colored and black *petite bourgeoisie*. Thomas, an acclaimed scholar, schoolmaster, and founding member of this class – whose case we will look into below – was widely regarded as the most learned and respectable person in the Trinidad of that period.

Indeed "Culture" – in the nineteenth century sense of the civilized, refined, and respectable – had been wrestled from both the planter elite and British emissaries in Trinidad, becoming the supreme property for this emergent class. Through the culture of respectability, its consumption and display, the colored and black middle class distinguished itself from the rest of the island (Powrie 1956). Brereton (1979:94) writes that,

the members of this group attached great weight to cultural and intellectual life. They boasted of their command of British culture, their ability to speak and write "good" English, their interests in things of the mind. It was literacy, familiarity with books, the possession of "culture" which mattered, as well as an occupation which involved no manual labour. These things were more essential criteria for membership of the middle class than wealth or lightness of skin. Most of the people in this sector were not wealthy, or even moderately well-off; many were teachers existing on very small salaries. In one sense they formed an intelligentsia, in that they took pride in being the cultured sector of the community, although they were not part of the ruling class.

The situation was similar to that in British Guiana, as described by Smith (1967:237):

The very forces that were used to integrate creole society – religion, education, the law, medicine, journalism, the civil services – resulted in the creation of a creole elite which, by the end of the nineteenth century, was referring to itself as “the intelligentsia.” This group owed its position within society to achievement in the sense that it filled valued occupational roles and commanded and manipulated “English” culture, but it is evident that its members came to believe themselves to be qualitatively different from the other non-Europeans by virtue of their “refinement.”

Smith’s quote describes somewhat the more *literal* dimensions of refinement and respectability of the *petite bourgeoisie* in the colonies, where a quantitative difference from other members of society was, as Smith points out, essentialized as a quality: from refinement to respectability. Respectability, in this regard, was understood more literally as a substance inhering in English culture, and thus in the individual who achieved this mental culture through education, as displayed and attested to by the consumption, possession, and performance of the appropriately prescribed emblems and signs. In postemancipation Trinidad, the two most important signs were the performance of religious faith and morals through Christian marriage and the mastery over and production of works in the English language, both written and spoken (Powrie 1956). The latter especially – the English language – became a highly valued emblem, understood to be *literally* good-in-itself, its grammar exercising (and thus displaying) a self-disciplining or morally fortifying effect on its speaker (recall the *Sterling Report*). Caught up in an incipient process of linguistic standardization wrought by education, the legal apparatus, and Creole society’s emergent class distinctions, and involving simultaneously the stigmatization and elimination (or belief of the elimination) of competing linguistic codes in official/formal contexts (most notably, French, Spanish, and the French-based patois, but also Portuguese, Chinese, Hindi, and an English creole or “bad English”) and the development of an allegiance to, though ambivalence and anxiety before, one highly-valued code (here, the “refined” English of the British metropole) (Alleyne 1985; Silverstein 1993), this emblematic valorization of English language and culture is not at all surprising.

One argument might relate this valorization of English language and culture to hypercorrection among the lower middle classes in New York City, discerned by W. Labov (1972). Labov argued that members of the second-highest status group in a speech community, eager to acquire social status, exhibit the most exaggerated patterns of style shifting toward prestige forms of talk as they become aware of the efficacy of these forms as valued social markers, although transgressing the norms of appropriateness-of-use of these

speech forms in their very eagerness to imitate to these forms. As R. Brown and A. Gilman (1972:272) write on the phenomenon:

Persons aping the manners of the class above them usually do not get the imitation exactly right. They are likely to notice some point of difference between their own class and the next higher and then extend the difference too widely.

In class-based societies this hypercorrection can lead to the commoditization of prestige forms, where as emblems of identity, social status, or lifestyle, these speech forms literally obtain economic values (Silverstein 1996:289).

In the robust class structure of the early postemancipation period in Trinidad, both a hypercorrection to imputed English-based prestige forms and concomitant commoditization of these forms as emblems can be detected among the emergent colored and black *petite bourgeoisie*. For instance, while the demand for a free and universal education had been recurrent among the “liberal” British colonial administration in the postemancipation period, a substantial movement among the middle class had formed on the island, calling for the imposition of fees on schools, realized partially in an ordinance in 1875 – a strange move considering that many of the supporters for the fees had themselves benefited from free education. The argument was put forward by a report from the Inspector of Schools and later substantiated in the *Port-of-Spain Gazette* that parents, particularly of the middle class and working class, did not appreciate free public education, as its being free tended to depreciate its value in the public eye. In fact, many parents preferred to send their children to schools with fees, and a school without fees was a school with fewer students. As Brereton (1979:84) remarks, “[i]n Trinidad the value of education was judged by the amount paid for it.”

It would be folly, however, to understand these phenomena in Trinidad as simple matters of hypercorrection, aping, or mimicry (and subsequent commoditization) on the part of the black and colored *petite bourgeoisie* to the prestige-forms and signs of respectability embodied by the resident British emissaries and professionals. This has widely been assumed in the literature on the black and colored middle classes in Trinidad – e.g., V.S. Naipaul’s “mimic men,” or C.L.R James’s criticisms – and has largely motivated the pejorative treatment of the concept by scholars: these are imitations/imitators of “foreign” values. Rather, we need to grasp the historical dimensions, that is, how respectability in Trinidad became not just a measure of one’s approximation to (or overshooting of) British standards, manners, and dispositions, but also (and more importantly) a measure of one’s removal or distantiation in the long run of history from the (transhistoric) legacy of slavery and the plantation (a sign of one’s history). Crucially, the diameter of respectability in Trinidad, needs to be delimited as, on the one hand, an instance of (synchronic) approximation or hypercorrection, and on the other hand, diachronic

remove from one's own imputed historic roots. Christian marriage and English manners and language, in this sense, become emblems of a historically-articulated identity, implicit representations of a diachronic distantiation from the regimentation of slavery and the plantation. Refinement becomes a trope with a more literal historical connotation, as an achievement from humble origins and against great odds since emancipation.

The related notions of "progress" and "self-advancement" become instrumental in understanding the operative historical significance of respectability in postemancipation Trinidad. Members of the *petite bourgeoisie* often described themselves as "self-made men" (Brereton 1979), and on these grounds sought to distinguish themselves from other social groups with their associated histories and represented diachronic distantiation – or lack thereof. On the one hand were members of the black working class and urban underclass who, as uneducated and illiterate manual laborers still speaking the "redundant patois," represented the "vulgar" vestiges of slavery: its degenerating effects. The same could be said of the decadent plantation elite, who with their unrefinement and crass materialism represented the other side of the effects of slave society (Brereton 1979). Neither ex-master nor ex-slave could boast the level of self-engendered progress or self-advancement achieved by the colored and black middle classes. Indeed, it was often the case that this emergent group believed itself to be more refined and respectable than the British emissaries circulated to the island, from whom the concept originated. After all, to what amount of "progress" or "self-advancement" could they lay claim (see Thomas 1889)? Thus, while respectability was the very ritual center of Creole society in Trinidad, this was always in terms of the historical transformation *of* but *away from* what came *before* – and herein lies the difference between this local Trinidadian valorization of respectability and the very British concept of respectability discussed earlier.

To discuss respectability in Trinidad any further requires a more systematic discussion of this "before" to which Creole society represents an "after." I will do this on two levels: presently, with regard to the semiotics of slavery, by describing the plantation and its practice of "seasoning;" then by discussing the (re)articulation of this in the postemancipation period, in the representation of slavery's effects. In the next section of this paper I will relate these two levels more systematically in the example of J.J. Thomas.

While evidence suggests that slavery in Trinidad may have been more "mild" than throughout the rest of the West Indies, plantation life in Trinidad was nevertheless what Smith (1967), after Goffman, calls a "total institution," each plantation a closed social system or unit with a coherent internal structure, hierarchical and racialized. What could be called a caste system existed, in which status and social value were calibrated to an index of racial valuation via an ascriptive model of blood, descent, and degree of mixing: those with the "whitest blood" were the most highly valued; those with the "blackest

blood" (indicated by skin color, eye color, hair texture, and facial features) were the most devalued. Coupled to the related distinctions of origin of birth (foreign-born versus creole) and place and type of work (house-slave versus field-slave), this index of ascriptive racial valuation over-determined one's position on the plantation, somewhere between master and slave.

As a total institution, the plantation reproduced itself through the internalization of these prescribed identities via the compulsory and semiotically baptismal practices of seasoning, to which a newly imported slave had to submit – in essence, a series of "[m]echanisms ... designed to effect a clean break with the past and a destruction of the [slave's] old self so that a new set of attitudes – a new 'identity' – can be imposed" (Smith 1967:230). Beginning with the horrific Middle Passage, and through the rigors of seasoning (e.g., systematic docketing, numbering, and standardized dress, but also calculated physical as well as psychological violence in the form of beatings, acts of re-naming, and separation from loved ones), the African was ritually incorporated as a slave on the plantation, inscribed in body and mind with an entire regime of meanings and values, "in effect reborn into a new social system" (Smith 1967:231). It was this practice of seasoning, its precision and repleteness, that motivated – and haunted – representations of slavery in the post-emancipation period.

Here we move to the second point, where plantation seasoning and its representation constituted a discursive axle around which the historical imagination of slavery churned. On the one hand, belief in the "degenerative effects" engendered by seasoning served as fodder for debates regarding the educability of ex-slaves, reinforcing the view that, while physically liberated from the plantation, blacks might never escape the more entrenched internalized consequences (Wood 1969). Later beliefs regarding the degeneracy of the elite plantocracy and its incapacity to fully enter Creole society after abolition – beliefs held by both the "progressive" British colonial administration and the island's middle class – similarly suggest the power these imagined consequences of slavery and seasoning exercised in Creole society (Brereton 1979; see Hodgson 1838:76; Thomas 1889).

Ideologies about the French patois spoken on the plantation, and later by ex-slaves and their descendants in the postemancipation period, illustrate the persuasiveness of this imagination. Discourse, in this gesture, articulated the "degenerative effects" of slavery quasi-linguistically: the patois was the trans-historic contagion through which slavery continued to exercise its intellectually degrading, morally debasing forces. That the English-based Creole – or "bad English" – was increasingly noticed in Trinidad as English, more and more, occupied public policy, only exacerbated these perceptions. While it had been the contention of planters during slavery that the French-based patois found on the plantation was the outcome of the admixture of African and Western elements – distortions caused by a barbaric and childlike mind trying

to grasp a superior language (the so-called “baby-talk theory”: see Alleyne 1985:160; Decamp 1971) – different interpretations of the extant patois emerged in the postemancipation period. According to one conspiracy theory, the patois was intentionally fabricated by slave owners for slaves as a means to “degrad[e] their own intellect,” thus “retain[ing] them in the most deplorable mental darkness ... to prevent their emancipating themselves” (Hodgson 1838:121-22). Other theories – e.g., the so-called “deficit theory” (Alleyne, 1985; Morgon, 1994) – argued that the hardships of slavery had stripped and warped the minds of blacks and even their (freed) children: the persistence of the French-based patois in the postemancipation period, along with the emergence of an English-based creole, was seen as overwhelming evidence for this theory (Buscher 1969).

First found among abolitionists – from whom the words above are taken – these representations of the patois’ (*trans*)*historical* dimensions quickly diffused among colonial policy-makers: the patois became a sign of history (a time of degeneracy), but insofar as policy-makers mobilized around it, taking stances toward it, it became, as well, a sign in history – a privileged site for historical action. For example, representations like these gained currency with the Inspector of Schools in Trinidad. In an 1859 report, after briefing the reader on the impediment of the patois for the intellectual improvement of the Negro mind (and thus the required grammatical remedy found in the English language, coupled with the prudence of time), the Inspector writes that,

[t]he minds of these little creatures are not apt at learning, for although not deficient in natural intelligence ... The chances are ... that its better tendencies and dispositions of self-reliance have been cowed and kept down by harsh treatment and repeated flogging. There are still existing among our present traits too many examples of *the ancient degraded character engendered by slavery*, but this will always be found accompanied by the absence of Education, and it will be many years probably before the influence which slavery had upon the African labourer will be entirely eradicated from the dispositions and habits become altered for the better [emphasis mine]. (*Report of the Inspector of Schools in Trinidad*, quoted in Gordon 1963:65-66)

Here, the patois was valorized as a naturalized audible mark of the “ancient degraded character engendered by slavery,” and the very impediment to the “civilizing mission” of the British. It was a “rabble,” the scouring of Babel which through a transhistoric and intentional artifice hampered the educability of its speakers: slavery, not Africa, was blamed for the shortcomings of the colonial administration.

Ridding the island of the patois, thwarting its effects, became the express aim of education and public policy. “Teachers in patois-speaking districts were urged to ‘tackle resolutely’ the difficulties caused by its use” (Brereton 1979:164). Laws were promulgated outlawing the speaking of patois in pub-

lic – for it was the tongue of sedition and rioting – and barring it from the courts of law – for it was the idiom of rumor, perjury, and obscurity of mind. Patois, and through it the mechanics of slavery, were condemned as “virile” elements admitting irrationality in the labor market: when it came to labor contracts, the creole word simply could not be taken at face value – it had no honor, no respectability.

To recall the contrary movement by which the English language was simultaneously highly valued, standardized and commoditized, we can then see how, through legal and educational policy and artifice, a situation in Trinidad approximating a prestige-laden linguistic continuum was instituted in the later half of the nineteenth century, becoming integral to the emergence of a society ordered by class distinctions, but with historical roots in the plantation. To be sure, the linguistic situation in Trinidad at this time might best be described as “multilingual” following Mervyn Alleyne (1985), in which multiple standard and non-standard linguistic varieties (and norms) coincide. On the other hand, the pervasiveness of social valuations and linguistic ideologies attached to linguistic codes created a situation in Trinidad in which language forms were literally graded on a scale of prestige, from least prestigious (the French-based patois) to most prestigious (British English). The distance from one end of the continuum to other was such that a high degree of speaker awareness obtained regarding the two polar codes – *especially when we consider them in light of their ethnohistorical significances*.

It is important, then, to examine the ethnohistorical dimensions of this prestige-laden linguistic continuum, in which each pole of the continuum was not just about prestige but tacked down as a sign of the times. That is, we must grasp the larger cultural milieu in which linguistic use of each polar linguistic code was regimented by a local conception of respectability, doubling operatively as a schema of diachrony. Speaking standard English (particularly, British-sounding or literary English) in Trinidad obtained high valuations exactly because it tropically embodied a maximal, self-achieved distantiation from the days and ways of slavery, a maximal respectability. As we shall see in the next section, this was especially and *prototypically* the case when the speaker of English simultaneously embodied the more marked signs of the plantation, namely skin color. Indeed, the figure of a black person eloquently speaking English in Creole society was exactly the prototype of maximal distantiation, maximal refinement, hence maximal “progress” – recall the butler qua schoolmaster in the Dame Lorine masquerade. On the other hand, patois was the lowest prestige form in creole society exactly because it schematically represented diachronic stagnancy, a lack of “progress” or “self-advancement,” the pernicious consequences of seasoning. Located in the emergent class distinctions of the postemancipation period, as it were, Creole society’s prestige-laden linguistic continuum had one foot planted in the ideologies of achievement and egalitarianism, and one foot planted in the racial-

ist, blood- and body-based continuum operative in the time of slavery, to which it had to be reconciled.

Yet, if the plantation fixed one permanently and ascriptively to this blood-based continuum, it was the perceived flexibility of Creole society's linguistic continuum in relation to this racialized continuum that enabled a discourse of "achievement," "progress," and "self-advancement" in the postemancipation period. Indeed, cultivation and civilization in Trinidad were understood quite literally – though tropically – as the supercession of the patois by English over time since the event of emancipation. The rise of English on the island became the primary measure by which the overall remove of society from the vagaries (and dangers) of slavery could be gauged. Thus, for example, it was with satisfaction that, in 1880, the Inspector of Schools remarked in his annual report on,

the use of the corrupt local jargon called "Creole" among the Trinidad born portion of the population. 10 or 12 years ago no child belonging to the lower classes born in the island spoke English except in school, and it was a rare thing to hear English spoken in the streets. Now the use of English is the rule, and though the Creole patois is still too often heard, its days are evidently drawing to a close. (quoted in Brereton 1979:165)

As valorized forms, English and the patois became simultaneously (ethno)historical functions, or as Parmentier (1985) writes, "signs of the times:" the patois of the ebbing and fading-from-view times of slavery; English of the present and future-to-come – an entering into the diameter of respectability. The black and colored middle classes, in this capacity, became the living embodiment of both times, both places, and a maximal dynamic transformation across them. In Trinidad, they were progress embodied.

AN ANALYSIS OF J.J. THOMAS: A PROTOTYPE OF RESPECTABILITY IN TRINIDAD

The stern and cruelly logical doctrine, that a Negro had no rights which white men were bound to respect, was in full blast and practical exemplification. Yet amidst it all, and despite of it all, this gifted fugitive conquered his way into the Temple of Knowledge, and became eminent as an orator, a writer, and a lecturer on political and general subjects. Hailed abroad as a prodigy, and received with acclamation into the brotherhood of intelligence, abstract justice and moral congruity demanded that such a man should no longer be subject to the shame and abasement of social, legal, and political proscription. (Thomas 1889:139)

The above epigraph was written by J.J. Thomas (ca. 1840-89) in praise of Frederick Douglass, but may as well served to narrate his own life. In this section I relate the person, writings, and voice of Thomas to the broader milieu of respectability. Here, we see that respectability was a more complicated thing

than previously alleged, having been caught up in the political complexities of history and its representation. In this regard, we can think of J.J. Thomas as a prototype of an ambivalent but respectable, educated black man (and member of the *petite bourgeoisie*) in late-nineteenth-century Trinidad, himself a sign of history – like Douglass, an exemplar of the self-achievement that was possible for a black man – but also a sign in history, in that he became a standard to be emulated by others in Creole society (Brereton 1977).

Teaching in and attaining education through the normal schools was one of the few means for blacks in Trinidad to achieve a respectable occupational status. This was certainly the case for J.J. Thomas, who as the son of ex-slaves of “unmixed” African descent was regarded as fully black by society’s standards. Thomas graduated from a local normal school in 1860 and quickly climbed the ranks in Trinidad’s educational system. Regarded as the outstanding teacher of that era, Thomas was appointed in 1870 on recommendation of Governor Gordon to the post of secretary to the Board of Education and the College Council, effectively putting him in charge of the two boys’ secondary schools on the island. Later, toward the end of his life, Thomas became headmaster of the San Fernando Borough School. J.J. Thomas was more widely known on the island, however, for his social, literary, and scholarly feats: he lectured on education and submitted numerous commentaries on public policy; he co-founded the Trinidad Athenaeum, a literary and debating society; he penned the introduction to *Free Mulatto*, a work by J.B. Philips; he translated Bordes’s *Histoire de la Trinidad*; he was editor of the *Trinidad Monthly* as well as the *Review*; as a scholar of language, Thomas studied, spoke, and wrote French, English, Greek, and Latin, in addition to the French creole of his childhood (Brereton 1977, 1979:91-95; Buscher 1969).

J.J. Thomas’s acclaim spanned beyond Trinidad. Two of his major scholarly works were well received in London, and circulated throughout the Empire. The first, his *Creole Grammar* (1869), was a codification of the grammar of Trinidad’s patois, for which Thomas was elected to the Philological Society of London. His second major work was a reply to a defamatory travel account written by the British essayist, James Anthony Froude. In *The English in the West Indies* (1887), Froude argued that the inferior intellect of Africans and their descendants in the West Indies severely limited the degree of self-government the British Crown might prudently grant the colonies: at most, Froude argued, they should remain Crown Colonies. In his *Froudacity* (1889), Thomas crafted the most comprehensive rebuttal to this text produced in the West Indies, becoming one of the first early black voices from the Caribbean to strike back at the Empire. In fact, both works – *Froudacity* and *Creole Grammar* – were heavily influenced by the early Negritude and back-to-Africa movement, and Thomas’s writings can be understood as a presage to the independence and nationalist movements that would arise in the West Indies in the twentieth century (Lewis 1990).

J.J. Thomas's life and writings illustrate the ambivalent nature of being respectable in postemancipation Trinidad, the ambiguities of race and value among members of the colored and black middle classes. On the one hand, Thomas – perhaps even more than the representative British “birds of passage” (it was Thomas in fact who coined this phrase) – believed in the ideologies of the liberal era, of “progress” and the “civilising-mission” brought to the island by the British. After all, it was Christianity and education that had rendered a once “barbarous African Race” into a potential bearer of “Civilisation.” According to Thomas (1969:166), the rapid “moral upliftment” of ex-slaves after emancipation “bore glorious testimony to the humanising effects which the religion of charity, clutched at and grasped in fragments, and understood with childlike incompleteness, had produced within these suffering bosoms.” In this regard, the “civilized” values and customs of the British were to be emulated, the disciplining and regulatory effect of Christianity and English grammar tools to be deployed – the historical development of the race was likened to and embodied in the individual maturation of the child. On the other hand, particularly toward the end of his life, Thomas became one of the main proponents of racial pride on the island, arguing that one's black blood and historical roots in slavery should not be forgotten but commemorated (perhaps as fondness for one's childhood) (Brereton 1977). As Brereton points out, the fact that Thomas was “of *pure* African descent and *looks* it,” as one newspaper, *The Chronicle*, reported (in Thomas 1969:28), was a common topic of public discussion and ever-present theme in Thomas's writings. As a teacher in the schools, Thomas had ample opportunity to observe firsthand a phenomenon he called “flunkeyism,” the internalized self-contempt and self-hatred of blacks in the West Indies, a pernicious “pre-occupation of the skin” which he argued hampered attempts to fully advance to civilization (Brereton 1979:105). Thomas's work was in many ways aimed at curbing these feelings, convincing young persons of the “incorrect tinge” of their own merit; racial pride was thus the motivating theme of both *Froudacity* and *Creole Grammar*.

Alexander's (1977) work on racial ideologies among Jamaica's colored middle class reveals a similar ambivalence toward race and value. On the one hand, Alexander discerned the belief that “a man is what he makes himself” and that race ought not to bear significance. But this belief is contravened, on the other hand, by a pervasive ideology that “the rational man who chooses his fate also contains forces over which he has no control” (Alexander 1977:425). Alexander argues that this “ambivalence over the relative importance of achieved and ascribed characteristics” results in a conflicted situation in which the “definition of race” is distinguished from the “hierarchical evaluation of race” – the former understood to be communicated through essentialized “white-” and “black-blood” and degree of “mixing;” the latter, however, understood to be “the result of a historical association of race with social

dominance and style of life: "being white [is] superior to being black because it brings advantages in the society. White is also superior to black because it is associated with a superior style of life; white is civilized, black is uncivilized" (Alexander 1977:428).

Yet, in Trinidad, it was exactly this historical association of the "evaluation of racial hierarchy" with civilization and style of life, with achievement and true "progress," that allowed persons like Thomas to resolve the conflicts of race and value. Respectability, in this light, played an important role, for it was through the peculiar form of respectability operative in Trinidad at the time that the two moments of J.J. Thomas were reconciled. In effect, Thomas's belief in the merits of (English/Christian) civilization and lifestyle and his simultaneous racial pride construct two grounds upon which the trope of diachronic distantiation, or remove, maximally appears (bridging these grounds). On the one hand, one celebrated one's humble and devalued past; on the other hand, one celebrated from advantage of having escaped it. And, this was exactly the point, in that the degree of escape pointed directly to one's own degree of self-discipline, self-motivation, and self-advancement despite the odds, and thus to one's self-worth. This, more than anything, was the defining feature of respectability in any late-Victorian milieu (reconsider the ideologies of individualism, egalitarianism, and liberalism). As Brereton (1977:24) writes of the public understanding of Thomas's achievements: "the wonder was a 'pure black' could write a book and get it accepted by learned Europeans; Thomas proved a point, or disproved a theory." Progress, in Trinidad, was achieved through historical tropes of temporal refinement that celebrate the value of one's blood and historic roots in slavery, but from a safe distance, that is, having already attained another status, respectability, where one's dark history is understood to be formative of this respectability.

For example, while there was much debate in Trinidad among black and colored members of the *petite bourgeoisie* regarding the celebration of the anniversary of emancipation in the West Indies – many arguing that it should not be celebrated, as it might dredge up the miseries of slavery, making manifest dormant prejudices – the broader consensus of the community was that, to the contrary, celebration would instead provide an opportunity to demonstrate the "progress" that freedom had enabled. This reached a zenith in 1888 with the Emancipation Jubilee, commemorating fifty years since abolition. The *San Fernando Gazette*, coming down in favor of the commemoration, may have summed up the respectable black and colored position, the position which J.J. Thomas widely advocated, by printing that:

[Support for the commemoration] demonstrated that there was yet a spark of manly independence left alive in the downtrodden race, and that with the advance of education ... they may yet reach that crowning point of civilisation which is marked by an absence of that servile shame which acknowledges no race, no country, no ambition. (quoted in Brereton 1979:108)

In other words, neither “flunkeyism” nor complete forgetting, but a prideful remembering of slavery and emancipation, was a valued step toward the future. At another level, that of distance, commemoration was necessary to foreground a full refinement to the “crowning point of civilization.”

J.J. Thomas’s concern with the patois similarly illustrates this historical imagining. According to his biographer, it was

largely for utilitarian reasons that Thomas composed his *Grammar* – to give to those who had not learned Creole as their native language a better knowledge of it, and to dispel once and for all the notion that it is “only mispronounced French,” a form of speech proper merely to illiterate peasants. (Buscher 1969:vii)

According to Thomas, however, a grammar of the local patois was necessary in connection with its “bearing upon two cardinal agencies in our social system; namely, Law and Religion” (Buscher 1969:iv). Far from idealistic, these reasons tapped into lesser-of-the-two-evils logic: a working knowledge of Creole grammar would on the one hand facilitate more accurate translations of evidence given in court by patois speakers (who had only recently been granted the right to testify in patois); on the other hand, a grammar would be useful for priests and pastors intending to preach the Gospel to largely patois-only congregations. Yet, if Thomas advocated knowledge of the patois in connection to law and religion, this was a matter altogether different for the educational system. Thomas wrote in his introduction that he would save the topic of education for another occasion, at which time he would write more particularly on “the nullifying effects of the patois on English instruction among us” (Buscher 1969:iv). Thus, while Thomas took enormous care to present Trinidad’s French Creole as grammatically regulated, consistent, and sophisticated – this “to prove that the Africans are not, after all, the dolts and intellectual sucklings that some would have the world believe them” (Buscher 1969:121) – he remained committed to prescriptions proffered by the likes of the *Sterling Report* and *Ideas for Curriculum*: mental culture or cultivation through education and the civilizing effects of the English language.³

3. Thomas’s treatment of Creole proverbs is interesting in this respect. Thomas (1869:120) wrote that “[the Creole proverb] has been the instruction and delight of the Negro race in all ages and stages of its existence ... We prize them as beautiful no less than intelligent deductions from the teachings of Nature, that free, infallible, and sublime volume, which Providence has displayed to all men, *but more distinctly to those who have no other revelation and guidance*” (emphasis mine). For Thomas, creole proverbs were a sort of implicit or natural tool for educational instruction. However, while this might present a means of nursing a population beyond the initial stages of civilization (what Thomas calls the “lock-jaw” phase, following an African proverb and his extended metaphor of racial development as child maturation), more artificial and sophisticated means would need to be applied: an educational system.

Though exposed to the French-based Creole since birth, J.J. Thomas chose not to speak it, and instead found inspiration for his own writings and parlance in the “high literature” of New World blacks (like Frederick Douglass, Hyland Garnet, Professor Crummel, Edward Blyden, Dr. Tanner, and Mrs. S. Harper), whose “philosophical subtlety of reasoning on grave questions finds effective expression in a prose of singular precision and vigour” (Thomas 1889:259). Here, Thomas’s appreciation of the moral fortitude of “mental culture” meshed with his pride in the “African Race” and its “progress.” Thomas argued that the precedence set by people like Blyden, with his Negritude and unity through back-to-Africa convictions, provided a ground for the further “upliftment of the race,” as a vanguard or “potential agency to collect and adjust [blacks throughout the world] into the vast engine essential for executing the true purposes of the *civilised African Race*” (Thomas 1889:260). Thomas wholeheartedly believed in the “civilizing-mission,” only he foresaw the role that self-educated, self-disciplined, and self-organized black men might play in carrying forth the project that had been started by the British but hastily neglected. In this sense, Thomas can be seen as a precursor to Garveyism (Brereton 1977; Lewis 1990).

Froudacity, J.J. Thomas’s dialogic rejoinder to Froude, was in fact written largely for these reasons. The question of constitutional reform and self-government had been broached in the West Indies – it was particularly strong in Trinidad – and as we have said, Froude used his travel account to voice a polemic against this movement, basing it on what he observed to be the inherent intellectual inferiority of blacks in the colonies (Buscher 1969:v). In *Froudacity*, Thomas argued that shortcomings in Trinidad might better be pinned not on the inferior intellect of blacks, nor on the debasing heritage of slavery, but rather on the ineptitude and mismanagement of governors sent to Trinidad by the Colonial Office, the birds of passage who had forsaken their civilizing duties (Buscher:vi). Rather, Thomas argued that if progress was made in Trinidad since emancipation, it was owing to the voluntarism of the island’s black and colored population:

In spite of adverse legislation, and in spite of the scandalous subservience of certain Governors to the Colonial Legislation, the Race can point with thankfulness and pride to the visible records of their success wherever they have permanently sojourned. (Thomas 1969:255)

These visible records, of course, were the respectable blacks found in the West Indies. A degree of voluntaristic self-government, coupled with a pride in one’s race and its history, was the logical step to engender further progress of this kind.

The argument made through our cursory analysis of Thomas is that respectability and its emblematics in Trinidad earned their meaningfulness exactly along these imaginings of local historicity, that is, as located

representations of particular diachronic process (signs of history): in this case, as progress and refinement. In this imagining, two historical moments are tropically related, one temporally calibrated to the past or the “before,” to the racialized, ascriptive-distinctions of slavery; one temporally calibrated to the present and future, to the possible “after” of Creole society and its distinctions of achievement and mental culture. In this regard, it is not unimportant that Thomas himself was black: when related to the less epidermal emblematics of identity in currency in Creole society (language, manners, marriage, etc.), Thomas became the very icon of respectability in Trinidad (both a sign in and of history).

To assess the efficacy of *this* form of respectability in Trinidad as a sign of and in history – a privileged site for social and historical action – I turn now, by way of conclusion, to look below and beyond the diameter of respectability, to reputations. To what degree can reputation in Trinidad be viewed likewise, as an imagining of the meaningfulness and value of local histories or diachronic process? How do the historical imaginings constitutive of reputations conflict with and contest the imaginings constitutive of respectability?

BELOW THE DIAMETER

Despite efforts to render Trinidad and its ex-slave population respectable through education, the English language, and Christian morals, and in contradistinction to the “progress” of the black and colored middle classes, a largely uneducated and unskilled black working class, or “underclass,” persisted on the island toward the end of the nineteenth century, crowding the cities of Port-of-Spain and San Fernando. After emancipation, many slaves had fled to the cities taking on work as domestics, porters, petty traders, dockworkers, janitors, cabdrivers, hucksters, and artisans. When the urban labor market tightened in the 1860s, however, this underclass found itself predominantly unemployed and at the source of a wave of petty crime, gambling, prostitution, and generally, “public indecency” (Alonso 1990).

The *jamettes* scandalized society with rowdy, obscene, and indecent behavior. As one scholar explains, this black underclass took pleasure in violating the more sacred mores of Creole society, in debasing its members’ respectability (Pearse 1956). To do so was constitutive of “baadness,” a highly valued thing for the *jamettes*, and in many ways the exact opposite of respectability (Alonso 1990:192). Indeed, with their vulgar behavior, the *jamettes* represented such an affront to respectable society

that a series of Vagrancy Laws were drafted in the late 1860s and throughout the 1870s.⁴

My account of reputation is necessarily cursory and draws heavily from an excellent article by A.M. Alonso (1990), who makes a similar, but distinct, argument. My primary concern here is not with reputation *per se*; rather, I am interested in reputation insofar as it became entangled with the diameter of respectability, in a sense, as a “contrary system.” In this regard, the historic emergence of the *jamettes* and their contrary system of valuation can be understood, in part, as a reversal of the historical imaginings constitutive of the respectability of the color-marked middle classes. There are three points that need to be made.

First, we need to relate the island’s carnival and its transformations in the wake of emancipation to the increasing visibility it provided for the *jamettes* in the public eye (e.g. the eye of the newspapers, its society columns, its opinion and editorial pages). Originally brought to Trinidad by French planters, Carnival increasingly fell under the dominion of the *jamettes*. With the exodus of liberated slaves to the cities following emancipation, the barrack yards behind the houses of respectable persons became spaces for hidden masquerades and wild dances, where *jamettes* parodied conditions on the plantation and celebrated freedom. Over time, these celebrations moved from the barracks to the streets, in full view of society, and became connected to the yearly Carnival celebrated between Christmas and Easter. By the 1870s and 1880s, it was possible to speak nominally of a *jamette* version of the festival (Van Koningsbruggen 1997).

Carnival, for the *jamettes*, became on the one hand a celebration of both freedom from bondage and the underworld of slave life – of identities valorized (often secretly) within slave quarters. With their dramatic qualities and

4. Besides the Vagrancy Laws, a series of laws were promulgated to oppress certain “obscene” customs. An 1868 Ordinance outlawed the worship of “African” obeah, an offense punishable by jailing and flogging (Pearse 1956). African wakes too, especially those of Shango cults and Shouters, with their loud moaning and wailing in the patois, were condemned, considered “lewd,” “orgies of the dead,” and, according to Carter’s *San Fernando Gazette*, “one of the lingering relics of a slavish and barbarous age” (quoted in Brereton 1979:156). In 1883, a Music Bill was introduced to prohibit drumming and the playing of other “primitive” instruments in public spaces. An editorial at the time lambasted the “primitive” dancing that accompanied this drumming as, “the most disgusting obscenity pure and simple, being an imitation more or less vigorous and lustful by the male and female performers of the motions of the respective sexes whilst in the act of coition” (in *Fair Play*, quoted in Brereton 1979:160-61). “Female depravity,” the Inspector of Prisons had advised some years before, “is a sure test of general decadence in any state” (quoted in Brereton 1979:122).

infamous “rituals of reversal” (DaMatta 1980; Bakhtin 1984), the masques⁵ of Carnival proffered mediums through which an otherwise lumpen underclass was transformed into a highly differentiated class of “stickmen, singers, drummers, dancers, prostitutes (another meaning of *jamette*), *bad johns* (swashbucklers), *matadors* (madames), *dunois* (*jamette* rowdys), *makos* (pan-ders), obeahman (practitioners of magic) and corner boys” (Cowley 1996:72). On the other hand, the masquerades of Carnival provided a medium for the *jamettes* to ridicule the prudish values of respectability and its heady notion of high mental culture, along the lines of what Bakhtin (1984) has called a Rabelsian reduction to the “bodily lower stratum” as figured through sexually inverted and perverted bodies, in other words, the grotesque. Brereton, for example, gives the following description of *Canboulay*, the procession commencing Jamette Carnival in Trinidad:

Bands of prostitutes roamed the streets of Port of Spain making “indecent gestures” and singing “lewd songs.” There were traditional masques with explicit sexual themes. The most notorious was the Pissenlit (or Pisani), literally “wet the bed,” usually translated as “stinker.” It was played by masked men dressed as women in long transparent nightdresses; it involved much sexual horseplay and was accompanied by obscene songs in patois. The *jamet* bands included both men and women. The women would generally be prostitutes, active or retired, dressed in traditional Martinique costume, always masked. At some times, and in some places, they exposed their breasts. The men were elaborately dressed, and would dance and strut through the streets, making suggestive comments to bystanders and propositioning women. Transvestitism and accompanying horseplay were very common, whether in the Pissenlit, or individually. (Brereton 1979:171)

Through Carnival, *jamettes* risked and won reputations. Wilson (1969:74) describes reputation, like respectability, as “both a cumulation of personal worth and an assemblage of signs of that worth.” Unlike respectability, the signs of reputation were measured in increments of virility and “baadness.” The grandness (and costliness) of one’s masque, the intricacy and absurdity of one’s masquerades, became emblems of this inner virility or “baadness.” Other non-standard and outlawed practices like stickfighting and wit in *ka-linda* – a verbal art later developed into calypso – became means of winning this status. For example, organized into rival gangs and “warring kingdoms,”

5. Though writing on Carnival in the twentieth century, Crowley (1956:194) distinguishes *masque* from *mask*, an important distinction for the historical component of this argument: The word “masque” indicates that the band wears costumes based upon a theme from history, current events, films, carnival tradition, from the imagination, or from a combination of these. It is thus differentiated from “mask,” the covering of the face and/or head sometimes worn by the masques. In Trinidad the expression *playin mas’* referred to the “masque” or masquerade.

kalinda stickfighters roamed the streets of the cities engaging in mock battles consisting of duels with enchanted sticks to the beat of rowdy songs that “boasted of the ‘baadness’ of the band’s stickfighters, who were variously characterized as quintessential ‘outsiders,’ as ‘outlaws’ or as ‘devils’” (Alonso 1990:101-2). The victor of the battle was he who could wield the more vicious stick, withstand the more deadly assault, and make the more witty turn of phrase. Through these means, the cities were divided into distinct territories for the duration of Carnival, ruled and conquered by celebrated kalinda “warriors” of the underworld: champion stick-fighters, or “batonniers,” who commandeered enough reputation to reign king of their district.

Kalinda songs reinforced what distinguished Jamette Carnival from other social events or milieus in Trinidad: they were dominated by the *public* use of patois. As the ubiquitous language of Carnival, the patois attained a highly valued and celebrated status in the late nineteenth century. The passage from the everyday to the carnivalesque was, for instance, figured tropically by a code-switch in acceptable public discourse from English to the patois, marking the commencement of the festival as a descent into the heroic and *historic* “underworld” of patois-speaking black kings, queens, and batonniers. As a publicly-recognized shift in code, from the “high” English of mental culture to the “low” creole of manual/slave labor, this spatial/corporeal trope was (besides being a Bakhtinian reduction to the bodily lower stratum) a trope of public time, conjuring up plantation temporality and its “seasoning.”

Second, as a cumulation of signs, reputation in Trinidad constituted an imagination of the meaningfulness and value of diachronic process that conflicted and contested with those of respectability. On the one hand, reputations incorporated its own image of local histories since slavery. On the other hand, this image stood out as a sort of reverse image of respectability (Alonso 1990), as such presenting a parody of its historical presumptions. For respectable Creole society, as we have seen, the shift over time from the patois to English tropically figured a diachronic refinement or self-advancement, a time of progress and a space of the mind and its mental culture. However, with reputations the tropic figuration is an *image* of reversal, and a competing (indeed inverted) valuation is revealed. From this perspective (that of Jamette Carnival), a shift from the English to the patois obtains ethnohistorical significance as tropically enacting a sort of diachrony of the grotesque, a parodic form of time and a corporeal space in which history is constructed as a process of bodily perversion or distortion:

(respectability) patois	→	English	=	diachronic refinement: time of progress/space of mind
(reputations) English	→	patois	=	diachronic reduction to grotesque: parodic time/space of body

It is interesting to which degree the highly valued understanding of the patois by the *jamenttes* during Carnival inverts the devalued understanding of the patois found in respectable Creole society. As closely associated to the body, and the distorted body at that, though opposed to English which was associated with the educated mind, the patois was understood by Creole society to be at once a product of Africa, a product of the harsh physical labor of slavery, and a product of the corporeal punishment administered on the plantation. A calculus of the grotesque was applied, in which the body had cowed the mind. One observer in Trinidad, for example, likened the patois spoken by ex-slaves to the shrieks of animals, loathing their “execrable accomplishments” and “stentorian organs of noise,” given to incessant “rows” and fits of “yelling and bawling, whistling and singing” (Day 1852:61-64). Even persons like Thomas, who argued against the notion that the patois was a mispronunciation of the French, found occasion to remark that “[a]s Creole is an uncultured speech; whatever of such euphonic refinements it contains is the result of accident and mechanical imitation” (Thomas 1869:13) (where “mechanical imitation” was associated with instinctual or animalistic propensities: a lack of free will; nature rather than culture). The point, however, was that Creole was understood in respectable society as a grotesque version of “proper language” (as is so often the fate of dialects under conditions of linguistic standardization).

Yet, it was exactly this grotesqued/corporeal understanding of the patois that constituted the virility and “baadness” of reputations for *jamenttes*, literally conceived as power dwelling in the body. To speak patois was self-evidence of this “baad” internal constitution. Note, for example, the relation between the *jamenttes*’ “baad” constitution and the “bad” constitution that Creole society posited for the patois speaker, where the topography of the first word is literally an expanded, grotesqued version of the second, but in which the overall judgments of both forms are re-valuated. Here, the ethnohistorical assumptions are structurally reversed: one is not becoming more refined over time, but literally expansive in space – exaggerated speech (via the bending and stretching of grammar rules),⁶ is valued over the use of correct, precise speech.

6. One group of batonniers, the only English-speaking group, even though it was “bad English” (i.e., English Creole), called themselves the “Free Grammar of Corbieu Town.” Indeed, with the spread of public education and after a substantial amount of relexification of the French patois (creating an English Creole in Trinidad), respectable citizens found themselves increasingly appalled by the distorted use of the English language – that is, for uses not within the range of the prescribed precision-in-denotation. Van Koningsbruggen, for instance, recalls the surprise and horror of a teacher in a Trinidadian secondary school at the turn of the century: “Boys and young men spend hours poring over dictionaries, simply to try to master the meaning of words which for length may be measured by the yard” (Rohler, quoted in Van Koningsbruggen 1997:44).

That the patois was associated to the (distorted) body, and historically with the plantation, slavery, and Africa, was in this case a *good* thing: it provided powerful linkages to the darker, more magical forces that existed in the time of slavery, to enchanted words, to obeah, possession, the devil, and the African motherland (Alonso 1990). To be sure, these were words “uncultivated” and “unrefined,” but as such, they were words that retained their potency, yet to be discharged of their immanent force. The “mounting” of batonniers and their kalinda sticks by the slave spirits (obeah) provides an interesting example of this immanent force of the patois. Warriors with the greatest reputations were those who had the power to speak enchanted words inciting spirits to mount their sticks and enter their bodies, conferring upon them strength, agility, and aversion to pain: “Whenever they sang, ‘Djab sé yô nèg’ [the devil is a negro] they were infused with a satanic spirit which actually made them immune to pain; they could walk into battle, and meet sticks, stones, conch shells and even daggers, as it were anaesthetized” (Mitto Simpson, quoted in Alonso 1990:109). This devilish quality was a historically-constituted virility, and it was the means by which one garnered reputations.

The third and last point involves the critical stance toward respectability taken by reputations. For example, when understood in its parodic modality, the Dame Lorine masquerade can be seen as reconfiguring the imputed diachrony of the colored and black middle classes. The historical emergence of “respectables” is converted into something not of celebration, but parody, invoking a negative valuation of respectability and its *historic* pretensions. The diachronic transformation of butlers/field slaves into schoolmasters is instead schematized as a process of emasculation: the schoolmaster has forsaken his masculinity over time, the potency and virility immanent on the plantation and transhistorically embodied and conferred in and through “black blood” and the patois. The English language and the Christian faith, as the two most important signs of respectability in Trinidad, then obtained significance as emblems of the feminine, the impotent and sterile, opposed to the virility of the *jamenttes*. The respectable stance of celebrating one’s historical roots, but from a safe distance – the distance afforded by having escaped it – is re-valuated as, on the one hand, an emasculating distance, and on the other hand, proximity to one’s historical roots as virility. The former, of course, was projected upon the respectability of the black and colored *petite bourgeoisie*, the latter reserved for the *jamenttes*, as constitutive of their reputations.

CONCLUSION

In this paper I have tried to show how the dual framework of respectability and reputation might better be understood as folk concepts that, when exam-

ined in their sociohistorical contexts of use, incorporate both representations of diachronic process and valuations of these represented histories. In this sense, I have argued against understandings that hold respectability and reputation to simply be analytic concepts whose dual nature can be grasped through synchronic analyses. Rather, to understand these concepts fully, I argued, one must examine them in relation to local historical imaginings. Crucially, respectability and reputation in Trinidad need to be understood as operators in a much larger politics of historical representations. In postemancipation Trinidad this meant considering the way each incorporated both a representation and a valuation of diachronic process since the days and ways of slavery: how each related the historic transformation from the time before emancipation to the time after emancipation, the time of slavery to the “present” of Creole society. Respectability, as we saw, represented the diachronic process of certain members of Creole society (the black and colored middle classes) as one of progress and refinement, a self-ascribed positive valuation. Reputation, on the other hand, inverted this representation, re-constituting this progress as one of emasculation, yielding a decidedly negative valuation. Structurally, then, the lack of progress on the part of the *jamette* underclass, then, was re-presented with a positive valuation, as virility and “baadness.”

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CUBA ON OUR MINDS

Conversations with Cuba. C. PETER RIPLEY. Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1999. xxvi + 243 pp. (Cloth US\$ 24.95)

Real Life in Castro's Cuba. CATHERINE MOSES. Wilmington DE: Scholarly Resources, 2000. xi + 184 pp. (Paper US\$ 18.95)

The Cuban Way: Capitalism, Communism, and Confrontation. ANA JULIA JATAR-HAUSMANN. West Hartford CT: Kumarian Press, 1999. xvii + 161 pp. (Paper US\$ 21.95)

Castro and the Cuban Revolution. THOMAS M. LEONARD. Westport CT: Greenwood Press, 1999. xxv + 188 pp. (Cloth US\$ 45.00)

Cuba has attracted a great deal of attention from both scholarly and popular authors since 1959. The literature that they have produced has generated much heat, but has shed a considerably smaller amount of light. Most accounts have been situated at the polar extremes of ideology, either condemning or celebrating the island's revolutionary experiment and its maximum leader (for the former is often virtually totally collapsed into the personage of Fidel Castro) with the same degrees of vociferous, simplistic certitude. However, neither the fulminating diatribes of the anti-Castro Right nor the fulsome paeans of the Euro-American Left have done much justice to making sense of the complex, confounding, and contradictory realities of Cuban society before, during, and after the Revolution. Indeed, contemporary developments have only magnified the distortions rendered by the astigmatic lenses of cold war intellectualism.

The tumultuous events of the 1990s – the demise of the socialist world-system, the resultant collapse of the Cuban economy, and the consequent experimentation with market forces and the courting of foreign capital and

visitors, to name just a few of the most important – have both transformed Cuba and stimulated renewed outside interest in the island nation. The initial flurry of accounts predicting an imminent counter-revolution (e.g., Andres Oppenheimer's wistfully-entitled *Castro's Final Hour*) have been replaced by a raft of publications seeking to explain the endurance of the state socialist regime and to speculate about Cuba's inevitable, but by no means imminent, post-Castro future. The four volumes reviewed here, all published during 1999 and 2000, exemplify some of the trends and tendencies of the recent body of literature. At their best, they offer glimpses of a new, more nuanced understanding of Cuban society grounded in firsthand experience and careful reflection; at their worst, they reproduce the all-too partial (in the sense of both incomplete and biased) understandings of their predecessors.

C. Peter Ripley's *Conversations with Cuba* is perhaps the most engaging of the four. Ripley is an historian with eight other books to his credit, though none about Cuba. As with many other self-styled U.S. progressives who came of age in the 1960s, Ripley possessed a highly romanticized image of the Cuban Revolution and drew from it the inspiration that "people like us" (e.g., progressive white middle-class folks) could transform a society. Consequently when, in 1991, he was offered the opportunity to travel illegally to Cuba (in the company of a veteran journalist and photographer) to see how the reality of the Revolution measured up to his romanticized vision, Ripley leapt at it. *Conversations* is an account of that first visit and five others that he made between 1992 and 1999.

Although trained as an historian, Ripley's *modus operandi* is that of a journalist. He spends no time in archives or libraries, preferring instead to hang out in bars and on the streets in Havana, Santiago, and innumerable points in between, meeting and befriending people and, as the title suggests, talking with them extensively about their lives, their hopes, their dreams, and their assessments of the Revolution. During his first visit, Ripley developed two friendships that continue throughout the book and which serve as reference points for his decade-long narrative. One is with a middle-aged woman, Neddie, to whom the Revolution had brought education and advancement; the other is with Paulo, a young man who initially evinces the cynicism and disenchantment of many of his generation. In documenting the shifting outlooks and demeanors of Neddie and Paulo, Ripley traces the changing currents of Cuban society during the so-called "Special Period." By the end of the decade, it is Neddie who is bitter and disillusioned, while Paulo has refashioned himself into something of a hustling entrepreneur, seeking to thrive, rather than merely survive, in Cuba's brave new world of socio-capitalism.

Ripley himself also undergoes a transformation in the course of his narrative. Observing the arbitrary, capricious, and opportunistic maneuverings of the government at firsthand, he develops a more critical perspective on the revolutionary regime that he once idealized from afar. At the same time, his

romantic attachment to the Cuban people only intensifies as he experiences and describes what strikes him as inexhaustible reserves of friendship, community spirit, and adaptability to seemingly overwhelming circumstances. Those readers who have spent any time on the island will find resonance in Ripley's celebration of *cubanidad*.

For readers wishing to hear some of the voices of contemporary Cuba, *Conversations* will no doubt be an appealing book. However, readers looking for a more thoroughly grounded analysis of Cuban society will be disappointed. For a trained historian, Ripley's account is strikingly impressionistic. His own reflective voice largely disappears halfway through the narrative, and the book lacks a conclusion that pulls together his own views in an explicit fashion. As structured, the book closes on a note of open-ended ambiguity. Of course, given Cuba's uncertain future, such an ending might not be altogether inappropriate.

Like *Conversations with Cuba*, Catherine Moses's *Real Life in Castro's Cuba* is a personal narrative. Like Ripley, Moses has great admiration for the Cuban people and their endurance and grace under persistent adversity. The similarities end there. Moses is a former foreign service officer who worked as the press secretary and spokesperson for the U.S. Interests Section in Havana during 1995-96. As one might expect from such a background, she shares none of Ripley's romanticism for the Cuban Revolution. The emphasis throughout her book is on the failure of the Castro regime to provide for the Cuban people, and on the overwhelming political oppression that they live under.

Moses's narrative is comprised of a series of short thematic essays divided into two parts. The first part, "The Cuban Reality," examines popular attitudes toward Fidel, the problems of obtaining food, the institutionalized separation between tourists and Cubans, the growing divide between those Cubans who have access to U.S. dollars and those who do not, the sorry state of health care, education, and civil society, the desire of many Cubans to emigrate, and various manifestations of political oppression. The second part deals with "the Cuban spirit," that metaphysical resource of faith and determination that fuels the struggle to survive in the face of adversity. In this much shorter section, Moses provides brief descriptions of the current roles of the Catholic Church and what she refers to as Cuba's "mystical traditions" – *espiritismo*, *santería*, and *abakua*.

There are a number of things to commend in Moses's account. It is clear that she feels a deep and abiding attachment to the Cuban people, as well as a responsibility to convey the reality of Cuba as she experienced it. A good deal of what she describes is indeed true: Cuban society is becoming increasingly unequal, social services are in serious decline, and the government is, much as those on the foreign Left might wish to believe otherwise, repressive. That said, her account also leaves a lot to be desired. As with Ripley's book, a

near total reliance on firsthand experience gives *Real Life in Castro's Cuba* an overwhelmingly impressionistic tone. Readers are given no context in which to place what Moses describes, or to place Moses in relation to the wider Cuban reality. At no point in her narrative does she reflect on how her position affects the way she views Cuban society or the way Cubans view and interact with her. She is also at times prone to both oversimplification and selectivity in vision. Unlike Ripley, Moses possesses an overly romanticized view not of the Cuban Revolution, but of Cuba's pre-revolutionary society, as well as an underdeveloped appreciation of the last forty years of U.S. policy toward Cuba. The lack of critical reflection about the latter, while perhaps not surprising in an account written by a someone whose job it was to articulate the official U.S. party line on Cuba, raises serious questions about whether Moses's account conveys an accurate and balanced picture of the island's multiple realities.

In contrast to the first two works under review here, Anna Julia Jatar-Hausmann's *The Cuban Way: Capitalism, Communism, and Confrontation* combines features of personal narrative with a more scholarly analysis of Cuba's economic transformation during the 1990s. Unlike Ripley or Moses, Jatar-Hausmann is not a U.S. citizen and possesses a more personal connection to the island. The child of a Cuban mother and Venezuelan father, she was born in Havana and fled with her parents to Venezuela to escape Batista's repression in the 1950s. An economist by training, Jatar-Hausmann is currently a Senior Fellow at Inter-American Dialogue in Washington DC and a member of that institution's Cuba Task Force. *The Cuban Way* is based on research and interviews she conducted during a series of visits to Cuba beginning in 1995. Her goal is to provide some "facts," as she puts it, about "the day-to-day, down-to-earth, human, economic, and political realities of Cuba all the way from the flaws we know about to the strengths that we ignore" (p. xii). In practice, Jatar-Hausmann's focus is more on the economic than the political, but she does strive for, and achieve, a balance in perspective that the two previous accounts lack.

Jatar-Hausmann's maternal grandfather owned a hotel situated on Havana's seafront esplanade, the Malecon. Her 1995 visit to the building – long since converted into a residence for two hundred families – serves as the opening vignette for discussing the Revolution and its immediate aftermath. She follows by situating the Revolution within the context of other twentieth-century progressive movements in Argentina, Peru, Bolivia, Venezuela, and Guatemala, and providing a brief account of how the U.S. domination of the pre-revolutionary economy generated a frustrated sense of Cuban nationalism and socioeconomic inequality. For reasons that are never clearly articulated, Jatar-Hausmann treats the economic transformations of the immediate post-revolutionary period in an extremely cursory fashion, skipping over the 1960s in favor of chapters summarizing the economic situation of the 1970s and

1980s. The latter decade is something of a "golden age," as fat Soviet subsidies bankroll the provision of Cuba's much celebrated social infrastructure and the government begins its first serious experimentation with market forces in the provision of food and housing. The 1980s, however, are better described as a golden half-decade, as the brief flirtation with market forces is terminated in the "rectification campaign" of 1986 and the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance dissolves only a few years later.

Drawing on official Cuban government statistics, Jatar-Hausmann paints a detailed picture of Cuba's economic collapse in the early 1990s and its recovery, albeit quite limited, in the latter part of the decade due to the adoption of what she refers to as "capitalism *a la cubana*." Perhaps the book's most interesting and important chapter is the one that focuses on Cuba's newly emerging class of the self-employed, whom she refers to as "landrafters." Although legally permitted to exist since 1993, the self-employed find themselves struggling against the "bigger is better" state capitalism embraced by the government. In her final chapter, Jatar-Hausmann takes on the difficult challenge of predicting "what comes next." She begins by assessing the various theories that have been proposed for Cuba's problematic economic state, ranging from the inherent inefficiencies of the communist system to Castro's devious personal machinations and the inhumanity of the U.S. embargo. She argues that all of these purported explanations may provide a piece of the puzzle, but miss "the big picture ... the long-distance civil war still raging between those who won in 1959 and those who lost out" (p. 132). Going beyond Castro, she describes how the conflict between segments of the exile community and the governmental class has shaped and been shaped by external embargoes of trade and internal embargoes of ideas. Like a number of others before her, Jatar-Hausmann argues that the Helms-Burton Law has had the paradoxical effect of strengthening rather than weakening the Castro regime by stimulating Cuban nationalism. Moreover, the partial recovery of Cuba's economy during the latter half of the 1990s (which, at this writing, is seriously threatened by the emerging global recession) makes any simple or total victory by either side unlikely. Instead, she argues for the likelihood of some form of negotiated settlement.

Jatar-Hausmann's notion of the "long-distance civil war" is an intriguing one. It certainly helps to go beyond the single-minded obsession with Fidel Castro that has dominated so much of the literature on Cuba, to look at the variegated landscape of power that bridges the Straits of Florida. It is a concept that could also use considerably more theoretical elaboration and empirical documentation, which this author will provide, one hopes, in her future work.

Thomas Leonard's *Castro and the Cuban Revolution* is, in a number of ways, the odd man out of the four books reviewed here. It is a conventional history, one of the more recent titles in Greenwood Press's "Guides to

Historic Events of the Twentieth Century,” and includes none of the personal narratives that figure so prominently in the other three works. Indeed, it is unclear if Leonard has ever visited Cuba or has otherwise had any firsthand familiarity with the island. That is not to say that he lacks credentials, for he is the author of seven books on Latin America and serves as Distinguished Professor of History and Director of the International Studies Program at the University of Northern Florida. Still, after reading the other three texts, the apparent distance between author and his subject matter is striking.

Part of the authorial distance is a matter of the book's organization, which follows the uniform format of the series in which it is published. The text begins with a chronology of an event (in this case, the forty-plus years of the Cuban Revolution, which, I suppose, is better described as a meta-event), followed by a set of topical essays that examine the main issues and themes related to the event along with associated “problems of interpretation.” The concluding chapter is supposed to suggest the long-term implications and meanings of the event and place it within historical context. This is followed by brief biographies of key figures associated with the event, a selection of important primary documents, and an annotated bibliography. This is a fine organizational structure for a reference work. Unfortunately, the content of this volume falls far short of the form.

Unlike the other three works which, if they remain biased, at least recognize and attempt, with varying degrees of success, to escape the highly-ideologized way in which Cuba has been studied and represented in the literature, Leonard's account is very much of a piece with the traditions of cold war intellectualism. There are chapters devoted to explaining both the causes and the aftermath of the Revolution, Cuba's international relations, and the “angry” exile community in Miami. Whereas the book is accessibly written, the emphasis is on the progression of macro-events and policy changes. Readers get very little sense of the changing patterns and textures of social life, of the ebbs and flows of support for the regime, in short, of the complexities and paradoxes of Cuban life. Most disturbingly in a book striving to be a reference work, there is very little space devoted to four decades of U.S. efforts to undermine the Castro regime. The most problematic feature of the book, however, is the last of the thematic essays – the one devoted to assessing “*the* meaning of the Cuban Revolution” (emphasis added). The section is painfully short and does no justice to its subject. It is not a matter of mere semantics to ask the question: Meaningful for whom? Leonard seems unaware of something that the other three authors have very much in mind: the fact that the Cuban Revolution had, and continues to have, many different meanings for Cubans and foreigners of different ages, genders, classes, ethnicities, etc., and that these meanings are not fixed, but are constantly shifting within horizons shaped by the distinct but intersecting histories of persons and nations.

Leonard provides an extensive annotated bibliography but exercises considerable selectivity in its composition – there is virtually no reference to the considerable body of literature on Cuba written by authors of self-styled progressive or leftist persuasions. Even more curious is the lack of citations within the text of the thematic essays that form the bulk of the book. It is unclear whether this is a choice of the author or, rather, a peculiarity of the conventions of the series in which the book was published. In either case, the lack of citations in a reference publication is extremely problematic – while a reference work is supposed to synthesize what is known about a subject, it should also permit the reader to follow the diversity of interpretations through examination of the author's sources. In sum, this book falls considerably short of its goal of bringing “together in one volume the various topics that describe and analyze Castro's revolution” (p. xvi).

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RACE AND NATION IN THE DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

Coloring the Nation: Race and Ethnicity in the Dominican Republic. DAVID HOWARD. Oxford: Signal; Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 2001. x + 227 pp. (Paper US\$ 19.95)

Race and Politics in the Dominican Republic. ERNESTO SAGÁS. Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2000. xii + 161 pp. (Cloth US\$ 49.95, Paper US\$ 24.95)

Peasants and Religion: A Socioeconomic Study of Dios Olivorio and the Palma Sola Movement in the Dominican Republic. JAN LUNDIUS & MATS LUNDAHL. London: Routledge, 2000. xxvi + 774 pp. (Cloth US\$ 135.00)

The social and political relations between the Dominican Republic and Haiti, and especially their racial and ethnic contents, are extremely difficult to approach in an even-handed and unbiased way. Much ink has been spilled over the conflictive relations between these two countries, and on race relations in the Dominican Republic. Much of what has been said must be considered unfounded or biased, not to mention sensationalist. The books under review try to provide new insights into the issue and at the same time to steer clear of these problems.

Let me start with some generally accepted facts. Haiti and the Dominican Republic, as two sovereign countries, exist side by side on one and the same island. Apart from this geographical coexistence, they have experienced different histories. Haiti was the pearl in the crown of French colonialism – with slavery as its mainstay – until the slave revolt of 1789 put an end to European colonial domination and created the “Black Republic” of Haiti. In the eastern part of the island, the Spanish colony of Santo Domingo had a lingering existence in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, when the motherland largely neglected its poor colonial possession. Slavery had never been very

important on the island, and this produced a mixed mulatto population. The struggle for independence brought the two forcefully together. Several wars ensued, and between 1822 and 1844, Haitian forces occupied the Spanish-speaking part of the island, which regained its independence, becoming the Dominican Republic. The new nation-state was repeatedly invaded by Haitian troops.

In the late nineteenth century the Dominican Republic became, for a variety of reasons, the stronger and more prosperous of the two. In the process, the population started to see itself as a nation of light-skinned mulattoes, euphemistically presenting its identity as *indio*. Every year, the Dominican sugar plantations employed thousands of Haitian cane-cutters who had to work under harsh conditions. This immigration and the existence of many poor Haitian immigrants in the agricultural border regions ultimately led to strong anti-Haitian feelings within Dominican society. In 1937, General Trujillo decided to undertake the infamous *matanza* in which many thousands of poor Haitian immigrants in the frontier zones were killed. The border region was forcefully "Dominicanized," as the process was euphemistically called. After Trujillo's assassination in 1961, anti-Haitianism continued to play an important part in Dominican politics. It was one of the central elements of the political program of Joaquín Balaguer, repeatedly president of the country.

In *Coloring the Nation and Race and Politics in the Dominican Republic*, David Howard and Ernesto Sagás each try to analyze and explain the persistence of anti-Haitian sentiment in the Dominican Republic. They follow similar paths in their research methods and perspectives, as well as in the structure of their analyses. Like most previous publications, both of these books focus exclusively on the Dominican side of the story. The perspectives of Haitian politicians, government officials, and representatives of the Haitian population are absent. Both Howard and Sagás complement written evidence such as newspapers, government documents, and the writings of Dominican intellectuals with interviews with members of the Dominican population. The impact of these interviews on their conclusions is not completely clear, but both books present direct citations and some quantitative analysis of the interviews. Both books also describe the historical development of political relations between Haiti and the Dominican Republic and analyze the gradual emergence of the myth of the Dominican *indio*, treating it as a clear sign of Dominican racism. They demonstrate the importance of the Trujillo dictatorship for the emergence of a virulent anti-Haitian nationalism and show how in the last decades of the twentieth century, Dominican society was pervaded by anti-Haitian ideas. They both point at the failed bid for presidential power by black candidate José Francisco Peña Gómez in 1994 and 1996 in order to stress the political importance of this racism, and they conclude that real

democracy in the Dominican Republic will be possible only if these racist influences can be eradicated.

There are, however, differences. Howard devotes a large chapter to racial ideas in Dominican literature and analyzes how Dominican migration to the United States has influenced racial stereotypes within the Dominican population. More importantly, Howard is clearly inspired by U.S. perceptions of race and racism, which take off from a dualistic black-white contrast. He argues that the Dominican anti-Haitian attitude must be considered a clear sign of a deeply rooted racism. He writes: "Overt racism has etched itself on popular opinion to such a degree that it has gained a level of respectability." In a suggestive manner he continues: "Those Dominicans who speak out in favour of Haitian workers and who acknowledge African descent incite treason in the opinion of others" (pp. 40-41). The conclusion is rapidly drawn. Modern Dominican society is characterized by "a pervasive racial prejudice that devalues the African influence in Dominican society" (p. 182). His interpretation of anti-Haitianism as racism and anti-Africanism distances his analysis from more culturalist or political interpretations that see Dominican anti-Haitianism as only one factor within a complex set of considerations that determine relations between the two nations.

Ernesto Sagás takes a different position, stressing the influence of an authoritarian past and considering Dominican anti-Haitianism as the result of a complex of factors. In line with authors such as Roberto Cassá and Pedro San Miguel, he stresses the ideological manipulation exercised by Dominican governments, especially those headed by Trujillo and Balaguer. He demonstrates convincingly that anti-Haitianism among the Dominican population is an integrated element of a neo-patrimonial political system which is still firmly in place in the country (see also Hartlyn 1998). An authoritarian and clientelist political system uses, as it were, the rejection of its neighboring black population to support its legitimacy and reproduce itself. There is no doubt in Sagás's mind that the anti-Haitian prejudices have led to "an ideological apartheid within the confines of a small island" (p. 18). However, he tends to see that situation as a political construction, rather than as a sign of widespread racial prejudice among the respective populations. He concludes that "Dominican elites have deliberately transformed antihaitianismo into a dominant ideology that cuts across Dominican society, to the point of distorting Dominican history and popular culture" (p. 126).

What do these contrasting interpretations mean for the analysis of racial antagonism on the island? The two books demonstrate that anti-Haitian feelings are widely disseminated in the Dominican Republic. However, they do not say much about the intensity of these perceptions, about their origins or, ultimately, about their possible impact on future developments on the island. Both books show how Dominicans have learned to phrase their sentiments. They do not, in my opinion, succeed in answering the question of how eth-

nic and racial differences within the Dominican Republic and between that country and Haiti influence daily practices of social and political relations. What do Dominican people do with that repertoire of stereotypes and racial images?

There is no doubt that it is notoriously difficult to investigate perceptions of race and of racial and ethnic difference. The gap between what people say they think and what they do in daily practice may be considerable. Contradictions may exist within one individual who hates blacks but still loves his black son-in-law "because he is different." Political manipulation of prejudices and feelings of frustration often make it almost impossible to know how people really feel. How are we to assess the attitude of a Dominican peasant woman who stresses that the Haitian workers camping out in the tobacco fields are like "animals," but at night goes there to bring them some hot food for supper? Racial differences play an important role in Dominican social relations, but does that mean that Dominican society is racist? Do prejudices against Haiti and its inhabitants point at structural or political racism in the country? Undoubtedly, anti-Haitianism and racial prejudice are widespread tropes in Dominican society, but we should try to figure out what they mean. To what extent can we speak of a system of apartheid in the country as Sagás suggests? And if it's not that, what other ways are there to describe the complex political and ethnic relations on the island? If Sagás is right in stating that at this moment "antihaitianismo is a convenient ideology, both for the Dominican elites and for the masses" (p. 126), why is it convenient and what will happen if the convenience disappears? These are the kinds of questions that I feel these studies should have addressed. Definitive answers are difficult to come by as yet, but in the remainder of this review article I wish to present some facts and insights that may point to alternative interpretations. In any case, I would argue that attitudes toward the Haitian presence in the country should be analyzed on different levels, not only as the result of racial prejudices, but also as a result of politics, social and economic inequality, and migration.

In many ways, the Haitian occupation of the island between 1822 and 1844 may be considered the beginning of Dominican anti-Haitianism – not so much because of what really happened, but because of the ideological significance it acquired in the twentieth century. Although historians have analyzed the period 1822-44 as one of moderate economic growth and overall stability, the nationalist Trujillo vision of history viewed the Haitian occupation as the cause of all Dominican problems and the legitimization of ideological anti-Haitianism. This nationalist ideology was complemented at the beginning of the twentieth century by an emphasis on the so-called *invasión pacífica*, a concept used to indicate the steady advance of Haitian peasants into Dominican territory and the consequent deculturalization and denationalization of the border region.

Ultimately, the massacre of some 12,000 Haitians in the Dominican border regions in 1937 was the conclusion of this historical nationalism. The analysis of this horrendous event may provide us with some clues to the nature of Dominican anti-Haitianism. Should we consider it as an unmistakable sign of a virulent anti-Haitian hatred within Dominican society? Or was it the ploy of a ruthless dictator who ordered his military to commit cold-blooded murder in an attempt to execute his Machiavellian nationalism? And even if the latter were the case, is not the fact that the army committed such a crime without protesting a sign of the deep-rooted anti-Haitianism among Dominicans? Howard, after observing that anti-Haitianism has always been virulent in the Dominican Republic, considers the massacre of 1937 as "the most remarkable and disturbing manifestation of this hatred" (p. 29). He then focuses, however, on Trujillista intellectuals like Peña Battle and Balaguer who defended the regime and helped it to formulate its racist ideologies. There is not one sentence on the admittedly very difficult question of the attitude and behavior of the Dominican population during this event.

Sagás stresses how the massacre was principally the doing of Trujillo himself, when he became aware of the fact that his political measures to minimize the Haitian influence in the border regions were a failure. "This repression was Trujillo's draconian way," he writes, "of securing his domains and eliminating what he considered a pernicious influence ... in the borderlands" (p. 46). It symbolized the beginning of what Sagás calls a "state-sponsored anti-Haitian ideology" in which Dominican intellectuals provided the regime with an ideological underpinning for its authoritarian policies. Again, Sagás gives us nothing on the perceptions of the Dominican population, but he does add an interesting sentence: "The Trujillo regime implemented state policies in which the spread of antihaitianismo ideology became a major priority, *as part of an orchestrated plan to subjugate and control the Dominican people*" (p. 55, emphasis added). He thus stresses the fact that anti-Haitianism has been used politically to subdue the Dominican population and avoid potential social conflict. I have italicized the last part of this passage because it also suggests that anti-Haitian feelings among the Dominican population were manipulated and may have been less self-evident than authors such as Howard want us to believe.

There is some circumstantial evidence to support this claim. On the basis of interviews in the region, Derby and Turits (1993) concluded that there was no generalized anti-Haitian feeling there at the moment of the massacre. Some Dominicans even tried to hide Haitian friends. That observation concurs with my own historical work, which showed that the populations on both sides of the border were intimately linked by a variety of relations and that anti-Haitianism in the border region was minimal at most. Similar conclusions may be drawn from the recent monumental study of the southern border region by the Swedish scholars Jan Lundius and Mats Lundahl. They studied

the development of the messianistic cult of Olivorio Mateo, which emerged in this region in the beginning of the twentieth century. After some years of peaceful existence in the sparsely populated Dominican border region, the cult was repressed by U.S. marines. It was forced underground during the long Trujillo government, but resurfaced in a small rural village called Palma Sola after Trujillo had been killed. The place became a sanctuary and cult center which attracted some 50,000 people in 1961-62. The Dominican authorities became increasingly uneasy with this uncontrolled religious movement in the sensitive border region, and their feelings were consciously or unconsciously fueled by sensationalist press reports in which promiscuity, communist subversion, voodooism, and anti-Catholicism figured prominently. Under circumstances never completely cleared up, U.S. trained elite troops, the so-called *cascos blancos*, invaded the village in December 1962 and bombarded it with napalm. About a hundred people were killed and some 700 others were imprisoned in this action. The perspective from the border presented in Lundius and Lundahl's *Peasants and Religion* is very insightful. It shows the almost unbridgeable divide between the central government and a region whose survival depended to a large extent on its good relations with Haiti. The book demonstrates how the anti-Haitian ideology was imposed only gradually on the region in the course of the twentieth century. It thereby qualifies interpretations that see the racial, cultural, and political conflicts between the two countries as eternal and unchanging.

The Haitian massacre and the bloody repression of the Palma Sola movement have never been the object of deep soul-searching or national purification in the Dominican Republic. No one was ever brought to justice for the *matanza* of 1937, and even the Haitian authorities preferred – for their own reasons – to bury the issue. The whole matter of silent complicity, inaction, support, or collaboration in the killing of thousands of Haitians will not be solved for a long time. It resembles debates surrounding other traumatic historical events like the genocide in Guatemala, the apartheid regime in South Africa, or the so-called Dirty War of 1976-83 in Argentina. Such a debate would be highly relevant for attempts to reach a profound understanding of the 1937 and 1962 events in the Dominican Republic. However, until we know more about the events, we should refrain from simple deductions as to the common, shared guilt of the Dominican population in general.

Moving closer to our own time, it is important to stress the fact that there has been no virulent or ideologically coherent anti-Haitian movement in the Dominican Republic. There has not been a Ku Klux Klan or an anti-immigrant party, drawing support exclusively from the Haitian issue. In the years after Trujillo's assassination there have been no mass demonstrations or lynchings directed against the Haitians. On the other hand, it could be argued that there was no need for such a movement, because the repressive policies of successive governments in the post-1961 period left no room for one. The

twelve-year government of Joaquín Balaguer closely followed the Trujillista ideology. Haitian immigrant labor was tolerated as long as it was confined to the sugar plantations. People of Haitian descent, often constitutionally Dominican citizens, were denied social and political rights in the Dominican Republic and lived in constant danger of repression or even deportation. Although under the populist or social-democratic governments of the PRD the Haitian issue was pushed to the background, the juridical apparatus and police forces continued to harass Haitian immigrants and their descendants. Recently, the neo-liberal government of Leonel Fernández resorted to deportations of “illegal” Haitian immigrants, referring to similar U.S. and European measures to keep out illegal immigrants and legitimizing these measures as an act of “modern” statesmanship.

So again we have to ask ourselves to what extent these official policies reflected perceptions among the Dominican population. Both Howard and Sagás try to answer that question by way of interviews with “common” Dominicans. In these interviews they attempt to assess the day-to-day perceptions and perspectives with respect to Haiti and Haitian immigrants – what we might call the *habitus* of racial and nationalist classification. There is no doubt that they find a lot of racial and anti-Haitian prejudices among all sectors of Dominican society. It is interesting to note that both of these authors take the presidential elections of 1994 and 1996 as examples of the weight of these prejudices in Dominican politics. During the 1994 elections the old conservative *caudillo* Joaquín Balaguer was pitted against the populist, black-skinned Peña Gómez. Because of Peña Gómez’s color and his (supposed) Haitian ancestry, the racial factor played a central role during the campaign. Balaguer and his campaigners resorted to widespread mudslinging, using negative advertisements, casting doubts on his political integrity, and depicting him as a voodoo-practicing Haitian who believed in satanic rites. Peña Gómez’s enemies also spread rumors that he wanted to unify Haiti and the Dominican Republic and would open the borders for unlimited immigration. With the approach of elections, the campaign intensified with vicious personal attacks in television commercials and anonymous flyers, all coming down to the fact that Peña Gómez’s Haitian ancestry made him a danger for Dominican sovereignty.

The 1996 campaign saw a less explicitly “dirty” campaign, mainly because Balaguer was not an official candidate this time, but the PLD under the direction of Leonel Fernández also tried to play the anti-Haitian card by declaring that many of the registered voters were in fact Haitian nationals. In spite of these accusations Peña Gómez received almost 46 percent of the votes in the May elections. Because he fell short of the required 50 percent, a run-off election between him and Leonel Fernández was scheduled in June. Two weeks before the election date Balaguer declared that his party would “unselfishly” support Leonel Fernández to prevent the Dominican nation

from falling into "not truly Dominican hands." With the combined votes of the two parties, Leonel Fernández won the second-round elections with 51.25 percent of the votes.

Most observers (and Peña Gómez himself) have taken these events as a sign that racism and anti-Haitianism still determine Dominican social and political relations. Certainly they do play an important role, but just what do these events tell us about popular anti-Haitianism and even racism in the Dominican Republic? The simplest of observations show that almost half of the Dominican voters cast their vote for Peña Gómez in spite of a vicious *ad hominem* slandering campaign by his enemies. Why do so many observers overlook this simple fact? Even Sagás, who so cleverly analyzes the events of 1994 and 1996, concludes that anti-Haitian ideology is still dominant in the Dominican Republic, without mentioning the fact that half of the Dominican population did not have a problem voting for a black candidate who for months was systematically vilified in the media. Even more significantly, at his premature death in May 1998, Peña Gómez was generally heralded as an important and honest politician. His death shocked Dominican society, especially the popular classes. His body was laid in state in the Olympic Stadium where all the important politicians came to pay their respects. His funeral was attended by hundreds of thousands. This may be viewed as a hypocritical homage for a deceased public person, but anyone who has seen and felt the grief caused by his death cannot but concede that he was a genuinely popular politician.

Where does that leave us in assessing popular racism and anti-Haitianism in the Dominican Republic? First of all, it demonstrates that observers are wont to see the racist, anti-Haitian side of Dominican political culture, without paying too much attention to the humanist, tolerant, and even anti-racist tendencies within Dominican society. This kind of observation also holds true for their analysis of political thinking. While intellectuals like Balaguer and Peña Battle are routinely mentioned, there is little room for the analysis of opinions on race and Dominican-Haitian relations by intellectuals such as Pedro Francisco Bonó or Juan Bosch. Even intellectuals with a more complex career like Ramón Marrero Aristy or Ramón Emilio Jiménez, who combined support for the Trujillo regime with an implicit rejection of his racist anti-Haitian policies, are largely ignored. It may be significant that attempts to insert these nuances into the debate, such as the publications by FLACSO under the direction of Rubén Silié (e.g., Silié *et al.* 1998) or the beautiful book by San Miguel (1997), do not figure in Howard's bibliography. It would be wrong to deny the racist, anti-Haitian tendencies in Dominican culture, but it is also unjustified to ignore the equally important democratic, humanist tendencies.

The most important issue concerns the analytical conceptions that we should use to study Dominican political culture. Howard routinely uses the

term "racism" to describe Dominican attitudes and perspectives. In doing so, he tends to create a homogenized image of an entire population rife with racist prejudices. This hardly leaves room for nuances, intermediate categories, anti-racist ideas, and social differences. Sagás is more cautious. He tends to distinguish between elite and popular attitudes, and time and again points to the political manipulation of racial categories. Lundius and Lundahl also discuss the fact that anti-Haitian ideologies were largely the result of political bickering and authoritarian politics in the twentieth century. They consider the emphasis on the racial factor largely as part of the search for a nationalist identity by Dominican politicians. They note the complex interplay between class, race, and nation in Dominican anti-Haitianism, and tend to look for the niches of negotiation, individual and collective contradictions, and the political manipulation of symbols. If there is anything that comes out of reading these books, it is, first, the need to define carefully what is meant by "racism" in the case of Dominican anti-Haitianism, and secondly, to spell out clearly which groups in Dominican society are under discussion. In my opinion, Howard generalizes too easily in casting the whole of Dominican society as utterly racist. Such a perspective tends to cover all kinds of nuances and subtleties that are present in day-to-day relations in Dominican society and which are much too heterogeneous, complex, and at times contradictory to place under the banner of racism.

Everyone who is familiar with Dominican society knows that there is a lot of "race talk" going on and that social and political inequalities are reinforced and sometimes legitimized by racial hierarchies. On the other hand, many subtleties and contradictions in individual and collective behavior will be hidden from academic view if we bring everything together under the concept of "racism." These are difficult and complex issues, and divergent traditions to discuss them may lead to contrasting conclusions about expressions of racism. Moreover, the distinctions are loaded with ideology and value judgments. What in one opinion may be harmless, possibly stupid, ignorance or stereotypical ideas, may in the other be dangerously racist and utterly reproachable opinions. Subtle irony for one author may come close to denial for the other. Who can claim to determine unequivocally where nationalism turns into xenophobia? Racial stereotypes into racism? Analytical distance into indifference? None of this, however, should relieve social scientists of the obligation to keep searching for answers to these difficult questions about racial perceptions, identity, and social hierarchies.

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BOOK REVIEWS

Law and Colonial Cultures: Legal Regimes in World History, 1400-1900.
LAUREN A. BENTON. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002. xiii + 285 pp. (Cloth US\$ 65.00, Paper US\$ 20.00)

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Lauren Benton has produced a provocative and insightful monograph that merits a wide readership among scholars of the Caribbean region. The book's relevance to those who work in this field, however, might not be readily apparent. Indeed, only four or five pages of the text explicitly mention any part of the West Indies (e.g., the section on marronage, pp. 61-65). It would, however, be a mistake for Caribbeanists to ignore this book for that reason. Though Benton's arguments derive from analyses of case studies from Mexico to India and South Africa, and from Australia to the Ottoman Empire and Uruguay, all have some parallel in an Atlantic world with the Caribbean at its center.

Benton locates her work firmly in a world historical context. She argues that colonial rule, along with the global order that emerged from it, was shaped not only by economic connections between societies but also by locally-specific cultural practices in negotiation with each other. As various legal systems encountered one another, they began to interact in ways that resulted in "global legal regimes." Benton defines this somewhat difficult concept as "patterns of structuring multiple legal authorities" (p. 6). The book takes us through a number of different examples to build a compelling case. The law, those who write it, those who enforce it, those who challenge its

imposition, those who agree to live by it, and those who resist it were all engaged in a tremendous process that created a global legal order.

Local culture certainly mattered, but in a way that might challenge many readers. This is decidedly not the story of creating a global regime in the same way as a global institution, such as the World Trade Organization (WTO). Rather, the book presents the rise of a global legal regime that allowed the "legal and political space for custom [to operate]" (p. 262). Benton at once accepts the idea of local conditions differentiating societies from each other and argues that the very *process* that led to differentiation was common to all societies, which, in turn, created a common global order. Though this concept is not intuitive, it nevertheless seems valuable and accurate.

The creation of a global legal regime amounted to a series of historical contests. The first, or most basic, might have been between indigenous legal institutions and those brought by colonizers. (Since the Amerindian populations of the Caribbean disappeared or dispersed fairly soon after Spanish colonization began, it might be harder to recapture this region's history than that of others.) Tensions emerged between religious and secular authorities over whose idea of law and order would be applied. And just as these disputes began to wane, often through syncretic behaviors, a stronger European state emerged.

The process of state formation and development is certainly essential to understanding Benton's argument. She claims that "state formation and the emergence of an interstate order are naturalized products of globalization" (p. 21). An extended discussion of this claim, woven throughout the text, would have made it easier for readers to grasp the characteristics, other than the law, of an emerging state. One fact, however, is crystal clear: this emerging state could, and did, engage in contestations with other states for supremacy. World historians have expressed this in terms of the rise of capitalism; Benton correctly wants to make it more complex than that by thinking about legal and political supremacy.

Modern Caribbean states did not simply spring from the colonialism of a particular European country. Indeed, many island colonies switched states, and legal systems, often more than once. So too do Caribbean states have a history of cultural pluralism. We have already seen a great deal of work on cultural exchange between masters and slaves, Europeans and Africans, within the institution of slavery. But there has not been a sustained investigation of the negotiations over how the law would be enforced, or even how it would be written, within the Caribbean colonies. Nor has there been much scholarly interest in thinking about how island residents of European descent interacted with island residents of another European descent. How did French Grenadians, for example, understand British Grenadians, and vice-versa? How did they adapt or change their legal systems with changes in state authority? Because the Caribbean is a "continent of islands," historically

ruled from European metropolises, colonists often wrote or reinterpreted laws in unintended ways.¹ That they had the ability or “space” to do this is exactly Benton’s point. The Caribbean, thus, at the center of an Atlantic world, would test Benton’s hypothesis and almost certainly provide fresh evidence in support of it.

The book’s argument is truly interdisciplinary. This is not simply, or even mainly, a narrative history. Its comparisons seem far too diffuse to organize in that way. Rather, Benton employs narrative in each case study alongside social science theories derived from anthropology, sociology, and even law itself. Doing so allows her to make a much stronger case for a more general applicability than just her specific cases. As a result, scholars who approach this book might initially find it daunting for its sheer breadth of knowledge, geographically and methodologically, but there is much to be gained by persevering and thinking outside of normal disciplinary and geographic boundaries. If nothing else, *Law and Colonial Cultures* will force Caribbeanists to confront the world in which their societies were made.

The South and the Caribbean. DOUGLASS SULLIVAN-GONZÁLEZ & CHARLES REAGAN WILSON (eds.). Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2001. xii + 208 pp. (Cloth US\$ 35.00)

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This collection, some of it dedicated to unexpected subjects, provides refreshment for Caribbeanists and students of the South alike. It consists of ten largely independent essays; four take the form of commentaries on the papers that they follow. The subjects discussed are slavery and Afro-American culture (Charles Joyner and Stanley Engerman), race and race relations (Aline Helg and Daniel Littlefield), music (Roger Abrahams and Kenneth Bilby), and political economy (Ralph Lee Woodward, Jr. and David Eltis). Bonham Richardson’s cheerful essay on a regional perspective opens the book; Milton Jamail’s essay on baseball concludes it.

1. I draw this phrase from Mark Kurlansky’s *A Continent of Islands: Searching for the Caribbean Destiny* (Reading MA: Addison-Wesley, 1992).

In effect, the book asks whether it is intellectually productive to consider the Caribbean and the South as parts of a single region. Since these places were geographically proximate, agrarian producers for the world market, on enterprises worked mainly by slaves of African origin and ruled by white planter minorities, they shared (and still share) certain broad social and economic features. The essays ponder phenomena present in both places – phenomena illuminated both by their underlying similarities and by purposeful contrast. Were the regional focus widened to include Brazil and its northeastern congeners, of course, we would almost be looking geographically at Afro-America in its totality.

Regions are not graven in stone, after all, and their formulation can be based on various criteria – made larger and smaller, superimposed for contrastive clarity, redefined for enlightenment. Regions only make sense in terms of the criteria for creating them. One of the sillier contemporary assertions – that regions are *by their nature* politically reactionary – is wisely ignored by the very conception of this book.

Two major themes, among others, surface in the essays. The first is whether to stress origins and tradition, against creativity and synthesis, in analyzing the history of culture in the Caribbean and the South. The second is at what level to deal with the nature of racism, when analyzing racist violence. I choose to confine this review mostly to just these issues, though this means neglecting other equally worthy contributions.

Charles Joyner and (somewhat surprisingly) Roger Abrahams both strongly endorse a conception of enslaved people creating new cultural forms by joining together what they knew with what they were learning under new conditions. Joyner uses examples from language and cuisine to argue for creativity, but his account rests particularly upon religion and music. He sees Afro-American religions and musics as precipitates of a sort – ancestral memories encountering unfamiliar traditions under particular constraints.

In dealing further with music, Abrahams – and even more subtly, his commentator, Bilby – traverse a contested zone. There was a time when pitched battles, more political than cultural, were being fought over the issue of what was or wasn't "African." Like the man who was asked whether he was still beating his wife, a scholar who might dare to suggest that some item of behavior might *not* be "African" was once pitifully vulnerable. Over time, however, as students of Afro-America at last began to learn about the culture concept, the terms of the debate changed. Tiny shifts in the rhetoric (even some in this book) suggest that a more sophisticated conception of culture change is at last beginning to catch on. At one time a perspective that concentrated on creativity and change was read as a denial of African origins or cultural strength. Now, as some Afro-Americanists inch uneasily toward a more innovationist view of African creativity, the debates of the past seem to be conveniently forgotten. Abrahams writes:

The expressive inventions found in one African American enclave seem to arise from the social and aesthetic disposition of New World black communities, which Robert Farris Thompson, John Szwed and I, and Sidney Mintz and Richard Price outlined some years ago (p. 98).

Abrahams puts together a veritable dream team in this sentence – “dream” in the sense that Mintz and Price could never have made the team “some years ago.” If these five scholars are now perceived by Abrahams as agreeing on the history and nature of Afro-American culture, I for one know that it’s not Mintz and Price who’ve had a change of heart. (Happily, perhaps, a book review leaves no room for substantiating that assertion.)

Helg’s treatment of the Cuban race war is authoritative. It illuminates interesting differences between the Cuban and U.S. Southern perspectives on the political equality of the races. But in his commentary, Littlefield suggests that the *cultures* of racism can be different and can manifest themselves differently. If one takes the view that all that matters with oppression is who is oppressed and what can be done about it, then the cultural forms of racism may be considered irrelevant. But in truth the cultural forms of racism are relevant to the issue of what to do about it.

If one were to try to find a way to represent the difference between Cuba’s racism and the racism of the South, one might start by talking about two things: racial continuums and the meanings of family. People in Cuba didn’t (and don’t) divide neatly into black and white, and many Cuban families don’t, either. In the South, people do divide into black and white – *and so do families*. In the South, if anyone in a “white” family isn’t “white,” that person either becomes white by fiat, or stops being in the family. In Cuba, there certainly are what are called “white families,” but people don’t commit suicide over it; and lots of families have what Southerners would call both black and white persons in them.

Those differences are socially real. Though they don’t have much to do with biology, they do have a lot to do with the ways people see themselves and others, with who gets called a sorcerer or a rapist, and with the forms and degrees of violence. Helg knows this; she talks about the one-drop rule in the South. But it does not inform her discussion of *practice* in these two different locales. One might argue that such a difference in perception and in structure militates against a regional conception that would include the Caribbean and the South. But Harry Hoetink pointed out long ago that it illuminates instead the way different societies have managed the systems of perception of their citizens.

I found these essays informative and stimulating. The book will make its readers think.

Space in the Tropics: From Convicts to Rockets in French Guiana. PETER REDFIELD. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000. xiii + 345 pp. (Cloth US\$ 60.00, Paper US\$ 24.95)

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Peter Redfield's dense yet elegant examination of French Guiana as a special place where the world's boundaries are eclipsed and redrawn in new but familiar ways over time and through space is an insightful engagement with modernity. Redfield's "shadow history" (p. 16) of the present and the future is at once an exploration of specific accounts of European colonialism, of the abilities of human beings to wield technology in new environments, and of the roles that constructions of such elasticity have played in the formation of planetary consciousness and cosmopolitan subjects. Weaving between multiple versions of Robinson Crusoe's industrious recreation of an imagined Europe in an exotic locale, France's attempts to define itself and to increase its imperial reach through Guyane as a penal colony, and twentieth-century European plans to re-align the tropics and utopia through the Ariane rocket base, *Space in the Tropics* is, quite literally, a "space project." Like any such undertaking, it is grounded in the mundane details of earthly life and materials even as it reaches extraordinary heights of vision and perspective.

Redfield divides the nine chapters of his subverted robinsonade into four sections that at first glance present a fairly straightforward structure of background information, case studies of the penal colony and rocket base, and a concluding analysis of their entanglements. Yet his ability to read not just against but with the grain, and thus to follow dominant and obscure currents in both specialized and popular logics in each of the interrelated periods discussed, presents a disconcerting picture of the surprising longevity and formative mutability of colonial technologies. This situates anthropology and scientific knowledge within a larger field of European expansion and modern power constructed in the "savage slot" of relations between nature, culture, and location (see Trouillot 1991).

Redfield's interests lie not with agency and language, but with the ways in which different horizons spur new technologies that in turn alter those horizons and human form. The parallels between nineteenth-century debates over the proper location of French prison colonies and twentieth-century technical analyses of the advantages of different sites for launching rockets demon-

strate how space is constitutive to, and in, modernity. Tropical space, presented as a variable form of the “natural,” is an agent in unequal encounters explored through Redfield’s attention to nineteenth-century geographically deterministic and racially tinged climate studies. These theories of human emplacement, still influential among technicians brought to French Guiana today, were rendered partially obsolete by the power of modern science to conquer disease. Such innovations in treating human “nature” in turn helped create a decidedly European “Cosmopolitan Man” (p. 203) whose history and construction guide this book.

Space in the Tropics makes a number of original contributions to recent understandings of colonialism. Not only does Redfield employ the technologies associated with both convicts and rockets to explore French nationalism and France’s relations with other colonial and postcolonial nations throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, but he argues that an analytical focus on the mutual making and unmaking of both colony and metropole may lose sight of the very real distinctions in power between people in different geographical positions. This insight structures his approach to both nature and work, or human activity in the world. Drawing on Walter Benjamin’s dialectical understanding of the relationship between human history and nature (1969, 1985) in which nature figures as a record of history and decay, Redfield suggests that nature is also a record and constitutive force of “modern” or futuristic projects, commenting that “the angels of history no longer fly in a straight line” (p. 239). The angels zigzagging derives in part from an allegorical “magic of scale” (p. 248) in which technological advances stand simultaneously as ever-widening circuits of scientific development and tangled masses of nuts and bolts. Human participation in one or both levels of this contradiction is a function of one’s place in the world. Attention to nature thus leads Redfield to work. He resituates Hegel’s universal account of master and slave in the particularity of the colonial experience via Hannah Arendt’s distinction between work and labor (1959). Here labor is something necessary for survival and work is more akin to the destabilizing and potentially liberating experience of Hegel’s bondsman.

Redfield uses a chance encounter with a hitchhiking Brazilian to illustrate how European workers and South American laborers take part in nature and economic systems in fundamentally different ways. While recent sociologies of science often attempt to demystify technical knowledge by demonstrating that it is an ensemble of social practices, this book’s analysis sharpens the constructionist position. Rocket launches directed by European experts, like ethnographies produced by specialists from the North American academy, are revealed as full of the magical beliefs that cosmopolitans usually associate with the tropics and their inhabitants. Yet the work and knowledge performed in Guyane, by Europeans coded as specialists and South Americans understood as creative tinkers, are valued in today’s world in radically different ways: For the anthropologist, “‘getting by’ was an intellectual experience; for

[the Brazilian,] it was a way of life" (p. 256). Redfield thus traces continuing inequalities around the ways that similar human practices work themselves into new ages and novel spaces while carrying traces of their previous forms. Nonetheless, he does so without questioning, for example, the assumption that social scientists rely on "getting by" solely as an intellectual experience. Contemporary anthropologists, like rocket scientists and laborers, belong to institutions predicated on the capture of economic resources. The author's concept of *getting by* might usefully be expanded to include this aspect of ethnography. This observation aside, the book as a whole is an extraordinarily insightful and self-conscious example of engaged ethnography.

Space in the Tropics makes significant contributions to recent discussions in colonial and science studies, globalism, geography, anthropology and history, and ethnographic method. It skillfully questions divisions between, for example, intellectual history and political economy by demonstrating how work, space, and human activity change in relation to new technologies even as these technologies arise from human needs in new spaces. Its innovative approaches to transitions and continuity, to longstanding debates over nature and culture, and to constructions of difference will be welcome additions to the toolboxes shared unequally by experts and *bricoleurs* alike.

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On Location: Cinema and Film in the Anglophone Caribbean. KEITH Q. WARNER. Oxford: Macmillan, 2000. xii + 194 pp. (Paper US\$15.50)

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This fine little book will be a valuable resource for cinephiles and syllabus writers alike. It will fit neatly into courses on twentieth-century cultural history and general classes on film and visual media. Providing insightful descriptions of major feature films, interviews with four major filmmakers, and a filmography, it will serve as an indispensable introduction to Anglophone Caribbean cinema for film enthusiasts, but it may not fully satisfy specialists in media criticism and cultural history.

Warner describes the complex predicament of Caribbean cinema, caught in a global cultural economy where West Indian filmmakers are dependent on international distribution, where acceptance of "Third World" film is conditioned by stereotypes and fantasies conceived by outsiders, and where the legacy of dependency on British and American cinema has left many local viewers with the impression that "foreign equals good; local equals bad" (Warner 1992:49). As a result, "Anglophone Caribbean audiences have not had much that is regionally produced to which to react over the years. They have seen instead a series of films that were shot on location by foreign filmmakers who did not really have the Caribbean region at heart" (p. 140). Illustrating this problem by analyzing the production, plotlines, and reception of the dozen or so feature films produced in the West Indies over the last thirty years, *On Location* proceeds to make bold suggestions for the development of a regional cinema.

Warner pursues these issues in five thematic chapters that also follow a rough chronology. He begins with an examination of the relationship between early cinema, literature, and the viewing audience, illuminating the way that social identification is achieved through spectatorship. Rendering a vivid picture of a mostly young, male audience, Warner explains the allure of stylish tough guys, men who appealed to urban youth struggling within a system they "do not fully understand and, as a result, cannot master" (p. 17). The characters and images of the early cinema were manifestly foreign and, existing as they did in the realm of pure fantasy, perhaps preferable to the stereotyped images of the Caribbean found in later Hollywood movies, devoid of local cultural context yet disconcertingly familiar. This relationship to movies set

the agenda for the first feature films produced in the Caribbean, made in response to the disorienting Hollywood stereotypes. With the international success of *The Harder They Come*, gritty and plebeian as it was, Anglophone Caribbeans were finally being portrayed “by their own, not by the outsider, who invariably missed much of what made them tick” (p. 80). And yet, dependent as they were on British and North American audiences, and with severely limited budgets, West Indian filmmakers had trouble finding “big-league success.” Caribbean immigrant artists in Canada and the United Kingdom have had access to better funding and wider distribution networks and were therefore a bit more successful in representing some sort of “Caribbean” perspective. Having established a convincing sense of the problem, Warner advocates some specific prescriptions, including tax incentives, pan-Caribbean organizations and festivals, and even ideas for specific projects, that would aid the development of a Caribbean cinema. Following all the special attention he has paid to the role of local music, literature, and social relations in creating a Caribbean sense of place, this last section of the book manifests his passionate desire to see the emergence of a genuine Caribbean identity in the world cinema.

Despite Warner’s keen depiction of the condition of Caribbean cinema, his discussion of the symbolic imagery and narrative strategies of popular film underplay the significance of fantasy. While he explores stereotyped images of place – the sun, the rum, the dancing – there is too little discussion of the kinds of stereotyped characters in play and how they became significant in Caribbean contexts. More importantly, his desire to see more “authentic” portrayals of West Indian life often focuses him narrowly on a film’s fidelity to “real” life, and he misses the opportunity to analyze the way in which cinematic images themselves mediate understandings of social reality. Indeed, popular cinema isn’t so much about representations of the real as it is about fantastic projections and identifications. Though the book describes the macho fantasies that inspired early male audiences, it would have benefited from a more sustained and extensive discussion of Caribbean fantasies and the interplay between those fantasies and social and political conditions. Moreover, the realism Warner would like to see onscreen in the Caribbean is in short supply in U.S. theaters as well. And the Indian musicals shown on so many screens in Trinidad give Indo-Trinidadians less a sense of their “ancestral land and culture” (p. 148) than they do of the melodramatic reveries of Indian nationals, themselves struggling within a system they “do not fully understand and, as a result, cannot master.”

Finally, the text is marked by an over-reliance on quotations. Warner is a clear and evocative writer; his voice is preferable to those of the many critics from whom he excerpts long passages. Often, rather than propelling his argument, the quotations beg for closer readings that would illuminate a cultural history of Caribbean film criticism. Nothing about these limitations, however,

diminishes the usefulness of the book. It will, above all, be a welcome tool for teachers in Caribbean and Film Studies and a wonderful companion guide to the emergent corpus of West Indian feature films.

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Twentieth-Century Art of Latin America. JACQUELINE BARNITZ. Austin: University of Texas Press, 2001. 416 pp. (Cloth US\$ 70.00, Paper US\$ 34.95)

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Transnational museum partnerships, cross-cultural collaborations, and hi-tech cyberspace displays characterize today's art world. Artists, art works, and traditions once purportedly "local" now engage in complex global liaisons. Notions of "home" and "the world" are no longer neatly defined. Despite this flux, one constant remains: the need to document art works and the trajectories of their creation and dissemination.

Jacqueline Barnitz responds to this need with *Twentieth-Century Art of Latin America*. Aware of the "inherent danger of one individual's interpretations of the art of so many different times and places," she nevertheless proceeds, believing the study of Latin American modern art should be accorded the "same coherence that has been afforded the study of European and United States art" (p. xvii). In providing a panorama of the region's art, Barnitz inserts Latin America into a canon of "world art" that has heretofore privileged European and (North) American traditions.

The lavishly illustrated volume emphasizes the major artistic movements and key practitioners who have shaped the region's visual culture over the past century. High-quality reproductions on nearly every page showcase individual works. Accessible prose narrates their relationship to artists and aes-

thetics at home and far away and points out important convergences among artists and movements across national and formal boundaries.

The experiences of individual artists in cosmopolitan centers like Mexico City, New York, and Paris showcase the cross-cultural aesthetic currents driving the region's art. Chile's Roberto Matta lived in Paris as a young architecture student where, perhaps inspired by an exhibit of mathematical objects, he developed his cosmos paintings; later, while in New York he integrated biological shapes into his work, this time inspired by local artists like Arshile Gorky. Uruguay's Joaquín Torres García spent most of his adult life in Europe where he drew inspiration from Antonio Gaudí in Barcelona and the theories of neoplasticists in Paris to create and disseminate his unique "constructive universalism" style. More recently, Argentina's Marta Minujín worked in Paris, New York, and Buenos Aires, drawing on various traditions to develop her own brand of pop art. Rather than locate art works and artists within isolated national traditions, Barnitz emphasizes the important points of contact throughout the Americas and Europe. She does so without casting Latin American art works as derivative of other traditions and Latin American artists as mere emulators of their European and (North) American counterparts.

In addition to exploring transnational cultural exchange, the book underlines the cross-fertilization of visual art with cinema, music, architecture, and literature: David Alfaro Siqueiros's murals reflect his conversations with the Russian filmmaker Sergei Eisenstein; Helio Oiticica's "Tropicalia" environment inspired the creation of a musical group of the same name in Brazil; integration of architectural and pictorial techniques by Fernand Léger and Juan O'Gorman yielded university buildings in Venezuela and Mexico in the 1950s; and Wifredo Lam, like many painters of his generation, drew inspiration from writers abroad (André Breton in France) as well as closer to home (Aimé Césaire in Martinique). Intersections like these permit readers to insert the region's artistic traditions within the larger cultural context.

The role of art critics in framing national and regional traditions is also treated in the volume. Barnitz notes moments when the region's art and artists collide with international critical paradigms: she interprets Breton's proclamation of Mexico as "the surrealist country par excellence" as "projecting a Eurocentric vision on a culture that seemed to fulfill his dreams of the marvelous and the exotic" (p. 103); she notes the consistent critical imposition of feminist readings on the work of María Izquierdo and Frida Kahlo; and she recognizes the critical tendency to invoke Gabriel García Márquez's magic realism "to explain exaggerations and scale discrepancies" in the work of Colombian artists (p. 257). Although constraints inherent in the survey genre impede Barnitz from examining transnational, aesthetic, and critical convergences in great detail, their mention in the volume provides readers with a series of provocative points of departure for further study.

Individual readers may, upon completing the volume, wish for more extensive coverage of certain regions and subjects. Attention to recent developments in Central America and the Caribbean seems sparse, as does treatment of the Latin American art diaspora. Yet, as Barnitz notes in her introduction, "any form of selectivity results in a partial truth." This awareness, coupled with her experienced critical eye, renders *Twentieth-Century Art of Latin America* an essential reference for scholars, educators, students, and art aficionados alike. Extensive footnotes, supplementary material (chronology, map, bibliography), and a comprehensive index round out the volume.

Herscheppingen: De wereld van José Maria Capricorne. J.J. OVERSTEEGEN. Emmastad, Curaçao: Uitgeverij ICS Nederland/Curaçao, 1999. 168 pp. (Paper n.p.)

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The publication of this volume on the work of José Maria Capricorne is an important milestone in research on the art history of the Netherlands Antilles. Capricorne was born in 1932 in Curaçao and grew up during the years when the presence of the oil refinery slowly transformed the island's lifestyle from traditional to urban industrial. The social environment of the Capricorne family was filled with carpenters, smiths, tailors, shoemakers, and other highly specialized craftsmen whose traditions were displaced by the island's modernization process. Because of his lack of professional prospects, Capricorne migrated to Brazil and later to Amsterdam, where he enrolled in a design school and then worked for different institutions. His most important positions were that of coordinator of the Akademia di Arte in Curaçao, from 1969 to 1977, and then of its director from 1982 to 1988. As the director, Capricorne organized a diversity of courses and also initiated – with minimal funding – an intensive exchange with artists from Europe and, especially, from Latin America.

The illustrations in Oversteegen's book give a broad impression of Capricorne's visual idiom as an artist. Most of his works are paintings, although he also made installations and sculptures, illustrated books, and worked with materials such as iron, wood, paper, and cardboard. On his canvasses, many with mixed techniques, several motifs are continually repeated.

One cannot help but be struck by the omnipresence of eyes. They recall observations from critics of Caribbean cultures, such as Chris Bongie, who argue that “wandering eyes” are the expression of migratory routes, transport, and captivity, related to the Middle Passage. In Caribbean poetic language, eyes and fish, together with the bright color blue, remind one of the route from Africa to the Americas during slavery. When Capricorne places those expressive eyes in a face that looks human, he always combines them with a smile. The painter poses his figures in a space in which they move, do acrobatic exercises, dance, or walk continuously and never seem to enter a state of immobility.

The figures in the paintings often seem to be dressed in costumes associated with flamenco dancers or with objects, such as guitars, used in fiestas of Andalusian origin. Cocks, which together with fish are among the most frequently reproduced animals, also point in the direction of Hispanophone countries, as well as Haiti. The frontispiece of Oversteegen’s volume shows the portrait of a child with a fruit basket on its head, this motif being one of the most typical images of Cuban artist René Portocarrero. The book’s illustrations are reproductions of Capricorne’s paintings in their original colors, and alternate between images of masks, musical instruments, stages, and near-empty rooms.

A major theme in Capricorne’s work is nature – more specifically, landscapes with a Caribbean dimension. His still lifes, for instance, show half-fantasy, half-real, brightly colored flowers in a vase decorated with dancing people. Nature, for Capricorne, seems to have a magical, animistic meaning. Nature is as alive as people are. Capricorne underlines this vision by stating that “I have learned to see without eyes and to hear without ears.” In his view, the *brua* (spiritual power) signals the lack of hierarchy between people and plants and animals. Leaves, for instance, are transformed into eyes, which turn into insects, evoking the dynamic of the metaphor in the natural environment.

Oversteegen did not publish a book specifically for art historians. He was a specialist in comparative literature and wrote this volume toward the end of his life, too late to see it in print himself. He obviously intended to describe Capricorne’s personal story in order to correlate it with themes in his work. The reader can expect neither a systematic chronology of Capricorne’s work (a so-called *catalogue raisonné*) nor a comparative approach to other Caribbean artists. But this does not diminish the relevance of Oversteegen’s publication. No previous writer has focused exclusively on Capricorne’s work, despite his being one of the most important living and working modern artists of Curaçao. People often think of him merely as a book illustrator, but this is only one aspect of his visual narrative. In reality, Capricorne’s oeuvre offers the most expressive images of Caribbean life within the context of the cultural history of the Netherlands Antilles, which has been enriched by a

now-disappearing group of independent, highly specialized, and internationally oriented Papiamentu-speaking artisans. Their self-confident and energetic spirit permeates Capricorne's artworks. Without his effort, the memory of this group's contribution to Caribbean culture would already belong to the dust of an unknown past.

Listening to Salsa: Gender, Latin Popular Music, and Puerto Rican Cultures. FRANCES R. APARICIO. Hanover NH: Wesleyan University Press, 1998. xxi + 290 pp. (Cloth US\$ 50.00, Paper US\$ 22.95)

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In current studies of Latin American and Caribbean popular culture, the analysis of consumption patterns and activities has taken on great importance with the expansion of mass media throughout the region. Nestor Garcia Canclini's leadership in this area (1993, 1995) has promised to give voice to the masses of pop culture consumers who have been historically silenced. In the world of Latin popular music, Frances Aparicio writes, this silence of consumers is especially poignant and problematic for women, because they are positioned at a dangerous crossroads between cultural affirmation/resistance on the one hand, and sexual objectification/exploitation on the other. Indifference toward the patriarchal norms of salsa is thus not an option for Latinas who value both cultural heritage and sexual self-determination.

This book is far from being a simple "salsa as literature" undertaking: salsa lyrics are shown to be important not so much for their literary inventiveness as for their social significance. Building on reader-response theory pioneered by feminist scholars such as Janice Radway in *Reading the Romance* (1984), Aparicio demonstrates the irrepressible capacity of the audience/consumer to listen/read creatively and give new meanings to lyrics composed within a patriarchal context. Her text emphasizes the consumption of the (always, already) gendered text of salsa music, what men and women "buy into" as both consumers of this genre and co-producers of the market which enables it to exist.

Since most salsa lyrics are written by men whose interests are often self-serving, she has plenty of easy targets for gender critique. Most insightful,

however, are her discussions of song lyrics that are not overtly misogynist, but perhaps cryptically anti-feminist, requiring more subtle analysis. Highlights include her discussion of lyrics by men that may appear to celebrate womanhood but actually involve what she calls "patriarchal synecdoche" (reducing women to body parts, etc.), as well as her discussion of women salsa singers who may subvert the patriarchal meanings of a song through mere changes in intonation, an example of what she calls, in a wickedly humorous vein, a "feminist rebuttal" (pp. 142-53) to the exaltation of women's butts in salsa lyrics and album covers.

In Parts I and II, Aparicio beautifully explicates the double-edged, multi-valent character of salsa as both alternative and mainstream, local and transnational, oppositional and oppressive, affirmative and exploitative. In doing so, she provides an excellent example of the value of feminist standpoint theory and, most importantly, broadens the theoretical scope to advance a vitally important discussion and defense of a Latina/Caribbean feminism which is culturally distinct from Anglo North American feminisms.

Part I provides historical and cultural background on the material as well as a cultural critique of the canonical literature on Puerto Rican music, dance, and cultural identity. The emphasis here is on the politics of representation, especially the uses to which male writers have "feminized" Island music (*La Danza*, *La Plena*, etc.). There is little or no original ethnography in this section; instead, it relies on the critique of texts by other people. Later on, in Part II, in a section entitled "Dancing to Salsa" (pp. 95-103), Aparicio uses a few ethnographic vignettes gathered from Edgardo Díaz Díaz and José Limón (1994), as well as insights from novelist Luis Rafael Sánchez, filmmaker María Novaro, and poet Víctor Hernández Cruz. Unfortunately, she missed a wealth of recent Afro-Latin dance ethnography available just before her 1998 publication (Barton 1995, Browning 1995, Daniel 1995, Savigliano 1995; Pacini-Hernandez 1995 is mentioned briefly in the preface). Moreover, if she had had access to two books published just before hers – Austerlitz 1997, and the Latin dance anthology edited in 1997 by Delgado and Muñoz, in which salsa-related articles by José Piedra, Mayra Santos-Febres, and Juan-Carlos Quintero Herencia stand out as especially relevant to her topic) – she would have been able to develop a much richer ethnographic frame for her discussion of the gender dynamics of salsa dancing.

In Parts III and IV, Aparicio provides a fascinating body of new research, based on ethnographic interviews with Latina informants in Michigan, about how they (as both Latinas and women, with all the tensions and conflicts that implies) listen to, and "read," salsa as creative agents. She makes a great contribution here to the sociology/anthropology of salsa in that she goes beyond salsa as a Latino response to the commercial hegemony of Anglo rock (cf. Ana María García's 1992 film, *Cocolos & Rockeros*, and Quintero-Rivera 1998) in order to break ground for an affirmative, Latina-feminist critique, a

deconstruction project which opens up spaces for more liberatory expressions, and calls for greater cultural creativity from salsa composers and consumers in order to break away from patterns of ingrained sexism and entrenched androcentrism.

Given the gender dynamics she describes, it should not be surprising that when Steven Loza (1999) listens to salsa, the tone is one of unabashed celebration. For Aparicio, however, the tone is one of anguish, bittersweet at best: whatever celebration takes place is under duress, in the all-encompassing shadow of the ever-present racist Patriarch. While she uses the tool of the ethnographic interview with great effectiveness, she does not supplement this approach with any participatory techniques other than her role as a critical listener/conversationalist. She reveals little of her own experience with the dance, for instance, and as a result, the book comes across as an armchair ethnography of salsa, with little or no room for reflexivity, or agency, on the part of the author/narrator. What gets short shrift are the many, often intangible, joys of dancing salsa (perhaps presuming an audience of converts and/or eggheads), and in this silence, as historical as that of all pop culture consumers mentioned above, the book reproduces a gender-coded text/movement hierarchy which is still at the heart of the cultural problem she addresses. The dance-friendly ethnographies of salsa and its Afro-Latin roots cited above offer a dynamic counterpoint to this approach, not to mention richly ethnographic literary works on this topic such as *Sirena Selena* (Santos-Febres 2000), a danceable novel in a salsa context, written in the rhythm of a bolero.

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Culture and the Cuban Revolution: Conversations in Havana. JOHN M. KIRK & LEONARDO PADURA FUENTES. Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2001. xxvi + 188 pp. (Cloth US\$ 55.00)

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The publication of this book might be considered part of a trend in which many foreign authors have visited or returned to Cuba for cultural reasons, especially after the disappearance of the socialist camp – upon which Cuba depended – and the tightening of the U.S. blockade of the island that has now been in place for four decades. Nevertheless, it has been precisely during the last decade that this dinosaur, the United States, has choked on the Caribbean crocodile.

In Cuba a frank and innovative policy of cultural rectification of all that was disapproved of and that was applied universally on the domestic front is what has allowed the thirteen people interviewed by John Kirk and Leonardo Padura to fill another void in contemporary Cuban bibliography.

Culture and the Cuban Revolution reunites in one unusual volume the vicissitudes of a group of artists of different ages and economic classes, men and women, heterosexuals and homosexuals, whites, blacks, and mulattoes living on the island during the Cuban Revolution.

Since the president of Cuba, Fidel Castro, proclaimed his historic declaration to Cuban intellectuals in 1961 and made it perfectly clear that no insurgent intellectual act against the new Caribbean political regime would be tolerated, there have been innumerable interpretations of his speech and hardly any testimonies of artists and writers who have spoken from the island about

those difficult and infamous years (the late 1960s and early 1970s); nor have there been cases of fortuitous vindication.

It is with reason that there are those in Cuba who have classified that period, when Cuban culture suffered bouts of marginalization and ostracism, as “the gray years.” They were times of arbitrariness and persecution, for religious and sexual preference as well as for such trivialities as having long hair and listening to certain kinds of music or dressing a particular way, all of which seems laughable to Cubans under the age of thirty-five today, but for many of us, then young writers and artists, was traumatizing.

This is what these thirteen men and women talk about; things that had never been told in the way they now have been to John Kirk (one of the most prestigious specialists in Cuban cultural affairs, and a British professor of Latin American Studies at Dalhousie University in Halifax, Canada) and to Leonardo Padura Fuentes (a Cuban author laureate who lives in Havana and enjoys wide respect and intellectual recognition in Cuba).

Both Kirk, in his prologue, and Padura, in his epilogue, counterpoint, clarify, and probe their interviewees – people who remember and judge their persecutors, sometimes painting them with furious brushstrokes. In this way, in the name of many of those who were not interviewed for this book or those who are no longer with us, they reinstate the historical truth.

Some interviews were missing, John Kirk confesses, and he mentions singer/songwriter Pablo Milanés, whose foundation by the same name disappeared because of the magisterial intolerance of a high-handed high government cultural official. The cultural resistance is revealed in the words of those interviewed, so that readers are given their own vision of all the different strategies of survival – Leo Brouwer, who had an accident that prevented him from playing the guitar with the perfection he once did, Alicia Alonso who confronted blindness, and the almost naïve declaration of poet Nancy Morejón, censured for years because of the whims of others, who was the first black female writer to win the most prestigious literary award in Cuba. It could seem ironic that these two women – to cite two extreme examples – are in the same book and have each received major recognition in their respective fields: Alicia, Prima Ballerina Assoluta, and Nancy, National Literary Prize 2001 – not to mention Antón Arrufat, who came out of the closet many years ago and received the Literary Prize in 2000.

Along with this kind of resistance and recognition are the personal memories: the estranged relationship between Chucho Valdés and his father, Bebo, both pianists; or the confessed passion for the sea of Silvio Rodríguez, stigmatized for his Beatlemania.

There they are, thirteen voices, like a true lucky number; an actor, a painter, several musicians and poets, a playwright and a film-maker. There they are, old and young, believers and atheists, brought together in one book, mixed together, meditating about their passionate and interesting lives, telling

it like it is, and most uniquely how they lived their lives, in order to leave a rich testimony of a past that has been omitted or altered, so that current and future generations may know.

With a dynamic understanding of the art of asking, Padura and Kirk have obtained a collection of exceptional interviews. And if that were not enough, the Spanish edition of the book was launched during the last Havana International Book Fair (February 7-17, 2002), which gave a whole other dimension to the insistence that they be heard once and for all.

Along with six other titles by Cuban authors from the island and abroad, the book, part of the Colección Cultura Cubana series, published in Puerto Rico by Patricia Gutierrez-Menoyo, set a similar precedent.

Culture and the Cuban Revolution reads like an extended dialogue. At the end of the book the authors talk among themselves to complete the collection of voices, the texts of John Kirk and Leonardo Padura relating to and conversing with each other, compensating for incomplete aspects, as in the interviews when questions that remain unanswered are responded to and amplified. In the epilogue, Padura synthesizes the problems and dilemmas of culture in Cuba – not only of the immediate past but also the present – and warns us of the dangers that could arise.

In short, this delicious book has the virtue that its subjects approach us with intimacy and they prepare readers to penetrate their work and that of others, while at the same time it brings us the fascinating culture of a creative and sophisticated people whose goal remains to be cultured in order to be free.

Cuba and the Politics of Passion. DAMIÁN J. FERNÁNDEZ. Austin: University of Texas Press, 2000. 192 pp. (Cloth US\$ 37.50, Paper US\$ 16.95)

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We have all seen those before-and-after pictures in newspapers and magazines advertising weight loss programs, anti-wrinkle concoctions, and the like. They usually include binary sets of images in which the manipulation of clothing, lighting, and hairstyle – if not outright doctoring of the pictures – offers a distorted picture of change; the object being to exaggerate the differences between the before and the after. Cuba's recent history – about which

most everyone has an opinion, informed or otherwise – has suffered from manipulations and distortions akin to those produced by advertisers who promise a slimmer waistline or a fuller head of hair. *Cuba and the Politics of Passion* is a welcome contribution to a growing body of scholarship that challenges the before-and-after trap that for decades has distorted the way the Cuban Revolution is seen by many scholars and the general public. Rather than viewing the Cuban Revolution as a profound abyss separating heaven from hell or conversely hell from heaven, Fernández traces historical and political-cultural continuities that transcend the epochs into which Cuban history is divided.

Among the book's many important contributions is the emphasis on viewing Cuba's political culture as the result of ongoing tensions between what Fernández describes as the politics of passion and the politics of affection. By politics of passion, he means the high principles of sacrifice and morality that place the common good before individual advantage. The politics of affection, meanwhile, point to the breaking of norms and laws by individuals to meet their needs and those of their relatives and close associates. These two contending forces, Fernández claims, have shaped Cuba's political culture and political institutions, whereby an absolute and Manichean rhetoric co-exists with the ability to negotiate and bend rules, and whereby sacrifice and heroism contend with self-serving corruption and graft.

Rather than attempt to summarize this complex and stimulating book, I wish to highlight a few of the many keys that it offers for the understanding of Cuban politics: Cuban politics as eclectic; Cuban political conflict as generational strife; Cuban politics as quasi-religious; and the centrality of the informal in Cuban politics.

Fernández recognizes eclecticism as one of the characteristics of Cuban politics, the result of a long and complex history that includes Spanish colonialism, protracted wars of independence, U.S. neocolonialism, and various experiments with corporatism, liberal democracy, authoritarianism, and socialism. He argues that Cuba's political culture manifests itself with varying degrees of combinations of various contending paradigms and concludes, for example, that Cuba's brand of Marxism is not far removed from earlier corporatist models.

Another key suggested by the book is the importance of paying attention to generational differences and transitions. While the role played by a younger generation in the revolutionary episodes of the early 1930s and late 1950s has been widely studied, Fernández's contribution is to push that theme to the next generational transition: the 1980s. He demonstrates the ways in which young Cubans have been marginalized from political and economic power and how they have rejected the rituals and myths of the Revolution. "Both the state and the young," Fernández states, "have accommodated and resisted each other" (pp. 99-100).

Yet another key offered by *Cuba and the Politics of Passion* is a view of Cuban socialism or Castroism as a political religion. Fernández provides various examples of how Cuba's revolutionary experience, while mostly atheistic, has been marked by a religious aura. He also argues that the Revolution strove to provide the citizenry with moral codes, a sense of meaning, and identity, the way a religious system would, accompanied with a new set of rituals, a revolutionary priestly caste, and a pantheon of martyrs.

A fourth, and particularly important, key is the recognition of the centrality of informal practices within political culture and practice. In contrast with quasi-religious ideals and rigid state directives, informality has been a constant in Cuban political culture. It has had and continues to have multiple manifestations, ranging from mockery of the political system (*choteo*) and the pursuit of individual arrangements for profit and survival (*botellismo*, *jinetismo*, *sociolismo*) to graver forms such as the prevalence of political suicide and the politics of vengeance.

To conclude, Fernández's book offers a refreshing and useful way to look at Cuban politics, transcending the before-and-after model that has so much distorted perceptions of Cuba's recent history. The anticipated transformations that accompany a post-Fidel Castro Cuba will once again challenge us to avoid before-and-after traps. From Fernández's perspective, that transition will come "without necessarily ushering in transformation in the political culture" (p. 141).

Reyita: The Life of a Black Cuban Woman in the Twentieth Century. MARÍA DE LOS REYES CASTILLO BUENO. Durham NC: Duke University Press, 2000. 182 pp. (Paper US\$ 16.95)

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I had to overcome some initial resistance in order to read this English-language book. Everything sounded strange, sometimes even false, to me as a Spanish-speaking Mexican perusing the narrative of a Cuban woman who neither "speaks" nor "thinks" in Spanish. Although I soon became habituated and ceased to feel annoyed, I never managed to fully block out of my mind the fact

that I was reading a translation. The matter of “betrayals” in the transition from one tongue to another is well known.

Reyita is the tale of an impoverished black Cuban woman, who, at the age of ninety-five, has managed to accumulate a great deal of experience. It is often made to seem as though old age is somehow an achievement in itself. The life of María de los Reyes Castillo, also known as Reyita, is much like that endured by thousands of women, both in Cuba and elsewhere, and not particularly special.

The book deals with the problems faced by a black woman who is forced to come to terms with the discrimination that existed, and continues to exist, in Cuba. She marries a white man, mostly to achieve a better standard of living, to hoist herself up a few rungs on the social scale, and by bleaching the tone of her descendants, to “improve the race.” Few things have been so common throughout Latin America and the Caribbean. It is the story of a region colonized and recolonized by white Europeans and North Americans. Reyita embodies two fundamental roles; she is both a spiritualist-priestess who practices *santería* and a mother-housewife of humble origins who aspires to join the petite bourgeoisie.

The historical context of her life is depicted as little more than a somewhat vague theatrical backdrop. Faced with the Revolution of 1959, an event that was to transform the entire fabric of twentieth-century Cuba, she laconically expresses the “grand hope that the triumph of the revolution would bring a better life” (p. 120).

The account of her relationship with Antonio A. Rubiera, her partner and the father of her many children, contains several contradictions. She is initially full of gratitude because he has married her, but it then turns out that they were never really married, and that the ceremony was nothing but a sham. Even though he never strays from her side, Reyita appears to be greatly disappointed when she discovers that she is unmarried. At one point, she states that she and Antonio were deeply in love (p. 167), although she had affirmed earlier that she never loved him, feeling that they were almost like brother and sister. She then undermines this to some extent by noting that they never stopped making love (p. 123), a claim she later contradicts by asserting that they stopped having sex a few years before his death (p. 168). We know memories can be treacherous, if not downright deceitful; but this text might have benefited from better editing by the interviewer, Daisy Rubiera Castillo, who is Reyita’s daughter.

In the book’s introduction, Elizabeth Dore writes: “it is also very political in the sense that the personal life was conditioned by the politics of the era in which she lived” (p. 1). It seems to me that this somehow misses the point of the feminist slogan, “the personal is political,” which has nothing to do with politics having an effect upon personal life; rather, matters viewed as personal take on a political dimension through their connection to the relationships of power that prevail in society. The introduction also affirms that Reyita “provides a rich

vein of information about the varied and contradictory nature of Afro-Cuban identities" (p. 9). Such a reading would seem simply to assert what the writer would like to establish as a politically correct academic. To begin with, the very concept of a varied and contradictory identity for Afro-Cubans could not be further removed from Reyita's identity. She is, in her own terms, uncomplicatedly black. Rather than a great range of elements with a bearing on the nature of the Afro-Cuban universe, we find very few, and are consequently not much enlightened.

Nor can we truly interpret this black woman's struggle for her own and her children's survival as feminist. It is argued that she was about to achieve a feminist consciousness but fell short. Once again, this seeks to imbue a narrative about a woman who is, in her own words, "a regular, ordinary person" (p. 21) with more significance than it actually possesses.

Due to her personal characteristics as a poor, black, elderly woman, Reyita seems to embody the Four Horsemen of the postmodern and postcolonial Apocalypse: race/ethnic group, age, gender, and social class. Furthermore, she is Latin American, and a citizen of a country that still stands for the notions of socialist revolution, anti-imperialism, and dignity. Cuba signifies a difference from, and a resistance to, the United States, and Reyita represents the persistence of a syncretic religious belief, together with certain practices of traditional health care. Thus, she is portrayed as the force of tradition battling revolutionary change. This is, no doubt, one of the messages that have resulted in the book's translation and publication in English. This *testimonio* plays a mostly symbolic role. It can easily be transformed into whatever we believe it should be, into whatever we feel it ought to transmit, rather than anything that it truly contains. It invites us to fall in love with the idea of a book.

Women and Urban Change in San Juan, Puerto Rico, 1820-1868. FELIX V. MATOS RODRÍGUEZ. Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1999. xii + 180 pp. (Cloth US\$ 49.95) [Reissued in 2001 as: *Women in San Juan, 1820-1868*. Princeton NJ: Markus Wiener Publishers. (Paper US\$16.95).]

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This book is a welcome addition to a handful of works published in the 1990s that single out urban spaces in nineteenth-century Puerto Rico as their unit of analysis. (See for example, Findlay Suárez 1999, Kinsbruner 1996, Martínez-Vergne 1999, and Mayo *et al.* 1997.) As a whole, they constitute an interesting departure from the themes favored by the Puerto Rican historiography of the 1980s, which tended to focus on the social, political, and economic dynamics of the export-oriented hacienda economy. These earlier studies rarely left rural settings to venture into the complex dynamics of urban environments and, when they did, they looked at the city as merely the seat of the political forces that affected the productive processes of the hacienda or as ports through which commodities were shipped in and out of the island. By focusing on urban settings, the more recent publications are able to bring to the fore new social actors, such as urban slaves, free people of color, prostitutes, elite women, domestic servants, and petty traders, among others, previously ignored by the “New Historiography” of the 1980s in Puerto Rico.

Firmly entrenched in the traditional women’s history paradigm, Matos Rodríguez states that the main concern of the book is “to see how women in mid-nineteenth century San Juan participated in, were affected by, and took advantage of the attempts to create a modern, respectable, and progressive city” (p. 2). In other words, he sets out to analyze how the modernization projects concocted by the city’s male elite impacted women of different classes and races. He is careful to point out that they were not passive bystanders, and documents the ways in which women of different classes and races confronted and resisted the changes brought about by the modernizing tendencies that dominated the city in the nineteenth century.

Drawing on a wealth of documentary sources, such as population censuses, minutes from the town council meetings, notarial contracts, and a variety of *cabildo* and church records, Matos Rodríguez carefully constructs a detailed picture of the geographical spaces in which San Juan women (*sanjuaneras*) lived their lives, as well as of the profile of the city’s population and

the changes it underwent during the period under study. He argues that until the early 1860s the population of San Juan was predominantly composed of women and non-white people. This picture began changing slowly from the 1860s on, when the demographic profile of the city's residents became more masculine and white. Although there is no doubt that this is one of the more interesting and compelling arguments in the book, it ignores some of the main interests of the students of racial and gender dynamics today – namely, how processes of racialization and gender identity construction occur. By limiting his explanation to a strict demographic process – i.e. population forces, Spanish urban and migration policies, and spatial-urban constraints – Matos Rodríguez naturalizes racial and gender categories and forecloses any discussion of the meanings of gender and racial notions in nineteenth-century San Juan and the social struggles that could have been taking place over them.

The book also presents a detailed portrait of the economic and social activities of elite and middle-class *sanjuaneras* as well as their lower-class sisters. It documents how elite women were engaged in a variety of “nontraditional” activities in the so-called public sphere. Through marriage to powerful men or by becoming their widows, some of these elite women came to be partners or owners of successful businesses, such as haciendas or commercial firms. Others were busy as retail merchants, buying and selling slaves, and renting out their properties. The experiences acquired in these economic activities were put to good use by these women, who used them to enlarge their presence in the public sphere, capitalizing on the new spaces of beneficence and education opened up by the wave of modernization.

Likewise, the economic and social roles of the lower-class *sanjuaneras* are examined. Although domestic work was an important source of women's employment, their economic participation was not limited to it. Women were also active in small retail shops and as street vendors, peddlers, and food sellers. A considerable number of the women laboring in these occupations were slaves, which highlights the similarity of the occupational structure of free and slave *sanjuaneras*. Moreover, the living and working conditions of some of these slaves were closer to those of the poor urban free population than to those of the slaves in the rural areas. Furthermore, as the work of Mayo Santana, Negrón Portillo, and Mayo López shows, some of the urban slaves were rented out by their masters while others led a rather independent existence, living apart from their masters and finding work for themselves (Mayo *et al.* 1997:96). Both the nineteenth-century abolitionists and the recent historians of slavery on the island have understood freedom and slavery as opposites. However, Matos Rodríguez does not problematize this dichotomy, even though his own data suggest that there were shades of slavery and shades of freedom that frequently overlapped. What does this mean in terms of our understanding of the institution of slavery on the island, the impact of its abo-

lition, and the process of constructing a racialized and gendered labor market? These are issues that the book leaves untouched.

The book documents the efforts of Church and colonial officials to control the lives of lower-class women through moral and social reform in order to remedy labor shortages. This endeavor took the form of plans to move the washing places, where many of these women gathered to work, out of the confines of the walled city. The presence of groups of poor women of color and their children, working and interacting among themselves in public spaces, was considered an eyesore in a city that was trying to promote an image of order and progress. Likewise, colonial and Church officials waged a campaign against concubinage and vagrancy as a strategy "to intervene and police the sexual and family life of lower-class women and men in San Juan" (p. 96). Faced with such attempts at control, lower-class women often resisted and defied the colonial authorities in a number of ways. Lower-class women had different views on sexuality and family life and often favored common-law marriages and extramarital relationships. Many of them expressed their political views publicly and openly rejected the authorities' attempts to keep them in their "proper place."

It is hard not to ask why this book did not incorporate some of the theoretical insights developed in the area of gender studies in the last years. Instead, it favors a theoretical perspective that naturalizes gender and race by precluding any discussion of how new gender and racial differences were constructed through social and political projects, such as modernization. In Matos Rodríguez's historical narrative, women of different races and classes either resist, acquiesce, or take advantage of colonial, modernizing, and patriarchal forces, but in the end remain essentially the same. In my opinion, an approach more sensitive to the theoretical developments of the area of gender and racial studies would have enabled him to go beyond the descriptive tone of some of the chapters ("women" doing this or that) and pose questions regarding the new gender and racial identities constructed by the different modernization discourses, and the ways these were transformed or modified in the course of the social struggles of the time. In spite of this, students of gender and racial formation will find in this book a solid empirical ground to begin posing new questions.

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MAYO SANTANA, RAÚL, MARIANO NEGRÓN PORTILLO & MANUEL MAYO LÓPEZ, 1997. *Cadenas de esclavitud...y de solidaridad: Esclavos y libertos en San Juan, siglo XIX*. Río Piedras: Centro de Investigaciones Sociales, Universidad de Puerto Rico.

Holding Aloft the Banner of Ethiopia: Caribbean Radicalism in Early Twentieth-Century America. WINSTON JAMES. New York: Verso, 1998. x + 406 pp. (Cloth US\$ 27.00, Paper US\$ 22.00)

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Winston James's erudite history of Caribbean political radicalism in the early twentieth-century United States allows us to understand the positionings of the better-known activists such as Cyril Briggs, W.A. Domingo, Amy Jacques Garvey, Marcus Garvey, Hubert Harrison, Otto Huiswoud, Claude McKay, Richard B. Moore, and Arthur A. Schomburg. But it also goes further, making intelligible the context of lesser-known figures. Egbert Ethelred Brown, for example, was a Jamaican Unitarian minister who, in 1919, wrote an insightful contribution to Carter G. Woodson's *Journal of Negro History* on the plight of labor in Jamaica, migrated permanently to New York in 1920, and established the Harlem Community Church in whose founding congregation were fellow Caribbean radicals Grace P. Campbell, Frank Crosswaith, Domingo, and Moore. (Brown changed the name in 1928 to the Hubert Harrison Memorial Church, later changing it again to the Harlem Unitarian Church.) He became chairman of the British Jamaican Benevolent Association and vice-president of the Federation of Jamaican Organizations, and co-founded with Domingo and others the Jamaican Progressive League. During the same time, because of financial necessity, he was also working as an elevator operator, serving as a speaker for the Socialist Party of America, and contributing to *The World Tomorrow*, a magazine of socialist, pacifist religious-oriented views. After the period of James's study, we find Brown using the ideas and words put forth by fellow Jamaican *émigré* Joel A. Rogers (1982 [1935]) in a sermon denouncing Mussolini and affirming Ethiopians' "racial" connection to New

World blacks in the early days of the Italo-Ethiopian War,¹ representing the Jamaican Progressive League as its secretary before the 1938 West Indies Royal Commission (the Moyne Commission), and later becoming involved in agitation for Jamaica's independence in his role as the chief fundraiser for the Peoples' National Party in the United States.

James's meticulously researched study might be categorized as "intellectual social history," as it felicitously combines engaging biography with a serious consideration and close working-through of the varied theoretical and political commitments of these Caribbean radicals. His extensive documentation includes forgotten radical newspapers, government documents, and secret FBI reports, as well as poetry, novels, short stories, and autobiographies. At the same time, James provides a detailed landscape of the formal radical political framework of the era, and the place of these individuals within it. Caribbean radicals were prominent in the Socialist Party, the Communist Party of the United States (which recruited its cadres from Briggs's African Blood Brotherhood), the Industrial Workers of the World, and other entities. Huiswoud, who came from Suriname, was the first black member, and a charter member, of the Communist Party. McKay and Huiswoud attended the Comintern's Fourth Congress in Moscow in 1922 and were part of the committee that drafted the final resolution on the "Negro Question." And among his many activities Moore was part of international campaigns to agitate for Antonio Gramsci's release from Italian fascist prison.² These affiliations explain, at least in part, the doctrinal impasses and bitter divisions – for example over the significance of the Bolshevik Revolution – that were evident between Caribbean radicals, as much as the concord that did obtain between some. It also sets up the sad story of how many Caribbean radicals were marginalized by their white comrades within these organizations. James's book nicely complements recent historical work on the Caribbean diaspora in the United States (e.g., Watkins-Owens 1996), although unlike many authors, James considers migrants from all over the Caribbean. It focuses, not surprisingly, on Harlem and migrants from the English-speaking islands, but deals with Puerto Rican nationalists/radicals in greater New York City and Afro-Cubans in Tampa, Florida as well. In addition, it contextualizes the lives of individuals who are the subject of other biographical studies (see, for example, Turner & Turner 1988).

1. Sermon entitled "Mussolini and Selassie," delivered October 1935, Brown (Egbert Ethelred) Papers 1908-1964, Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, New York Public Library.

2. See the poster reproduced in Sassoon (1982:157), which advertises for a "Victory Mass Meeting" in New York's Irving Plaza Hall to celebrate Gramsci's conditional release from prison. The poster mentions Moore in his capacity as an organizer of International Labor Defense. Gramsci was released in October 1934, and the meeting advertised in this poster was set for January 16 (no doubt 1935).

Caribbean radicals of other sorts were also of course members of black nationalist organizations such as Garvey's Universal Negro Improvement Association. The treatment of Garvey and the UNIA is evidence of a tension internal to the book and in James's own thought. For James to construct a Garvey à la Tony Martin would not do. And James is attuned to the pitfalls of the kind of Whiggish history that views Garvey through the lenses of post-Civil Rights U.S. black intellectual-cultural leadership. How, then, to assess Garvey from the perspective of progressive politics? James comes up with two solutions. One is to critique the UNIA from a gender perspective by focusing on the important role of women and their frequent status as second-class citizens within the organization (especially the unrecognized efforts of Amy Jacques Garvey), by pointing out other rife contradictions between UNIA theory and practice, and by chronicling the organization's demise. The second is to place the UNIA alongside the panorama of other organizations with which it competed. But James gives the UNIA its due, by acknowledging the role it played in the cultural-political Harlem Renaissance, and by writing that "what was so remarkable about the Garvey movement" was "not so much its rapid collapse," which was expected in the context, but "the fact that it managed to achieve what it did *at all*" (p. 194).

Another point of internal tension is a discussion that serves as a point of departure for the book and resurfaces directly throughout: this is the vexed question of the role and importance of Caribbean radicals on U.S. African Americans and in the struggle for civil and political rights. James begins the book with a frank discussion of the issue. He shows how contemporary Caribbean migrants saw themselves as natural leaders and were not averse to overestimating and boasting about their strategic leadership in the struggle, and how the exaggeration or the deliberate downplaying of their influence is a crucial historiographical debate. And he intimates that these considerations negatively affect relations between Caribbeans and U.S. African Americans today, preventing political solidarity. While affirming that "Caribbean migrants were indeed present in socialist and black nationalist organizations in numbers well out of proportion to their weight within the American population" (p. 122), James addresses, in his second chapter, the background of the migrants. Many had served in the West India Regiment, some were radicalized in their home islands, and some light-skinned persons were radicalized when their status position dropped upon entering the United States with its different "culture of race." Many migrants were not as deeply religious as their U.S. African American counterparts, many were better educated, and they tended to be younger. "Perhaps most significantly, Caribbean migrants had a socio-economic profile at radical variance with that of black America" (p. 80) – many were skilled artisans, professionals, and businesspeople. While James admires the pluck of the Caribbeans, he in no way depreciates the

efforts of U.S. African Americans or underestimates the barriers they faced in a racist-classist society.

Yet these tensions are not defects in this polished work. They are part of its allure, standing as evidence of James's honesty and committed stance, his willingness to engage the historical material and argue with it and through it, and help his readers do so as well.

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The Politics of Labour in the British Caribbean: The Social Origins of Authoritarianism and Democracy in the Labour Movement. O. NIGEL BOLLAND. Kingston: Ian Randle; Princeton NJ: Marcus Weiner, 2001. xxii + 720 pp. (Cloth US\$ 49.95, Paper US\$ 29.95)

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During the last two decades Nigel Bolland has been one of the most prolific and recognized scholars in the field of labor history in the British Caribbean. His articles, books, and conference papers deal with various aspects of working-class history, from slavery to postcolonialism.

The underlying thesis of *The Politics of Labour in the British Caribbean* is that the political involvement of the working class was a result of the economic crisis of the 1930s which intensified the long-developing social changes. Bolland also argues that members of the middle class who were forming political parties benefited from the simultaneous development and growth of trade unions.

The vast and diverse primary and secondary sources that Bolland consulted reflect his painstaking and noteworthy efforts in compiling such a study. The book's ten chapters are divided into two sections – the first part, appropriately entitled “The Origins of Organised Labour” and the second, “The Institutionalisation of Labour Politics.” Bolland depicts, as accurately as possible, the evolution of the British Caribbean's labor movement during a tumultuous period of colonialism. He focuses primarily on the politics of labor between 1934 and 1954 and utilizes a multidisciplinary approach.

Bolland identifies three charismatic authoritarian labor leaders who also possessed political ambitions – Alexander Bustamante of Jamaica, T.U.B. Butler of Trinidad and Tobago, and Eric Gairy of Grenada. He notes certain revealing qualities of Butler and Bustamante: “Their messianic style and proprietorial approach to labour organisation led them to define the trade unions, ... as if they were their personal property, with a consequent authoritarian disregard for accountability or democratic procedures” (p. 530). It is interesting that despite both the attainment of self-government and passage through a variety of political upheavals and cultural changes, this pattern of behavior has persisted among trade union leaders in some of the West Indian territories.

Bolland acknowledges the role of women in the Caribbean labor movement, especially as seamstresses, nurses, domestic workers, and agricultural laborers. He accurately views the denial to women of leadership roles among trade unions and political parties as originating from “the traditional sexism of the political culture and the wider social context” (p. 663).

The Politics of Labour in the British Caribbean does have some shortcomings: the book's title does not give the date of the study's historical framework, there is no map of the Caribbean clearly identifying the British West Indian territories mentioned in the study, and the lengthy historical perspectives tend to obscure Bolland's analyses and arguments and undermine the impact of his comparative approach.

The book also contains two fundamental historical flaws which cannot be easily dismissed. Bolland states that there were five elected seats for the Legislative Council in Trinidad and Tobago under the Constitution of 1925 (p. 204), when in fact there were seven. And he claims that the Grenada Workingmen's Association was formed in 1931 (p. 204), when it was actually formed two years earlier (see *Labour Leader*, November 16, 1929). (Further evidence of the earlier existence of the Grenada Workingmen's Association was its participation in the Third British Commonwealth Labor Conference, held in London in July 1930.)

The book contains two related chapters which might better have been merged or placed consecutively, as they deal with concurrent issues: Chapter 4, "Racial Consciousness and Class Formation," and Chapter 9, "Class and Ethnicity in the Politics of Decolonisation."

Despite the minor problems, Bolland's effort deserves commendation and respect. Undoubtedly, it paints a more complete picture than we had of labor's struggles in the British Caribbean. This comprehensive and valuable study will prove to be one of the scholarly masterpieces of Caribbean history.

Counter-Hegemony and Foreign Policy: The Dialectics of Marginalized and Global Forces in Jamaica. RANDOLPH B. PERSAUD. Albany: State University of New York Press, 2001. xviii + 248 pp. (Cloth US\$ 69.50, Paper US\$ 23.95)

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Exceptionalism is the term Randolph B. Persaud attaches to the ideology that sustained both the Jamaican Labour Party and the People's National Party during the 1950s and 1960s. Exceptionalism asserted that Jamaica possessed neither class nor race divisions and was therefore politically stable – a safe location for foreign investment. In adhering to this doctrine, Persaud writes that both Alexander Bustamante and Norman Manley "were exponents of representing the interests of minority ethnic elites and capital" (p. 94).

Even as this was the official position articulated by the dominant parties, Persaud argues that Jamaica's poor were becoming increasingly disaffected and were developing their own counter-hegemonic view of the world. His thesis is that the marginalized and poor exercised increased influence during the 1970s and that their counter-hegemony became the foundation for the pro-socialist foreign policy of the Manley administration of the 1970s.

Three groups emerged to articulate what Persaud calls a "subaltern anti-exceptionalism" (p. 96): Rastafarians, the most significant of them; the hard core unemployed; and the disaffected youths of the Kingston ghettos (the Ruddies or Rude Boys). The political left attempted to reach these groups, but made few inroads, primarily because its emphasis on class struggle rather than cultural opposition failed to evoke much of a response. The counter-

hegemony was, however, augmented by the ideology of black power and the activism of university intellectuals, most notably Walter Rodney.

Faced with an emerging oppositional bloc, the JLP government began to lose its grip. Persaud writes that during the late 1960s and early 1970s "it was becoming increasingly clear that exceptionalism might not be able to fully consolidate the cultural and class oppression in which modern Jamaica was made" (p. 114). The turning point was not so much the 1972 election which swept Michael Manley and the PNP into power, but rather the shift to the left and socialism that occurred in 1974.

Unfortunately, it is at this point that Persaud's analytic framework breaks down. For it is one thing to argue, as he successfully does, that the early strategy of dependent development required a foreign policy of accommodation to foreign, particularly U.S., interests. But it is another thing to explain the specific alternative direction that Jamaican foreign policy took after 1974. After all, as Persaud himself emphasizes, the counter-hegemony of the disenfranchised emphasized race and culture more than it did class struggle. And yet in the foreign policy shift that did occur, those concerns were subordinated in the effort to construct a closer relationship with the socialist bloc.

The political flux that Persaud describes was real enough, and the extra-parliamentary intervention of the poor in the affairs of state was palpable in these years. But the turn to socialism was by no means the only option that could have been adopted. Indeed Persaud's own inspection of the content of Rastafarian thought makes it seem that socialism would have been a distant second to an appeal to racial solidarity, a stance that socialism rejects.

That the counter-hegemony of the poor did not necessarily imply socialism suggests, I think, that Persaud has underestimated the role of the region's intellectuals in choosing the alternative path. It also suggests that nation-building was the price paid for adopting socialism. For if there were ever a chance to build a cross-regional consciousness that could have provided the basis for the construction of a Caribbean nation, this time of ferment was it. The West Indies Federation had failed because it was elitist and tainted by its colonial roots. But scarcely ten years later, the disenfranchised had begun to make their voices heard, and precisely because they did so in cultural terms, a real opportunity to join the people of the region in a common political project presented itself.

The attempt to construct socialism came at the expense of Caribbean nation-building. But that is not to say that the effort to construct an Anglophone Caribbean nation would necessarily have been successful. It was far from certain that the large Indo-Trinidadian and Indo-Guyanese populations would have been willing to share in such a project. And without Trinidad and Tobago's wealth and Guyana's geographic expanse, the viability of such a state would have been dubious. Furthermore, opposition from the United States might have been a further obstacle, though almost certainly that hos-

tility would not have reached the visceral level triggered by Jamaica's alliance with Cuba and communism.

Socialism in the Caribbean required the patronage of a large country to be successful. The hostility of the United States was simply too great for these economically vulnerable societies to choose this alternative path of development without a powerful protective shield in the form of markets, capital, technical assistance, and above all, military support. There was only one candidate for this role and when the Soviet Union decided not to provide the support to Jamaica, Guyana, and later Grenada, that it did to Cuba, socialism in the Caribbean was doomed.

Persaud misses this, I think, because he does not sufficiently appreciate that socialism was not the alternative articulated by the poor, but was the ideological project of intellectuals. Unfortunately, in their adherence to socialist ideology rather than nation-building, the middle-class activists failed to anticipate the consequences of their choice. Today, as the fragmented Caribbean struggles to cope with the pressures of globalization, we can see the tragic price that has been paid for that misjudgment.

Taking Haiti: Military Occupation and the Culture of U.S. Imperialism, 1915-1940. MARY A. RENDA. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2001. xvi + 414 pp. (Paper US\$ 19.95)

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It is seldom that one reads a book about Haiti with the scope, literary flourish, and detail brought forth by Mary A. Renda. She wears her politics on her sleeve, and that is good. One easily tires of so-called objective work on Haiti masquerading as social science with thinly-veiled ethnocentric and racist overtones. Hers is honest.

Renda mines sources that otherwise remain untouched, mixing categories in art, memoirs, political discourse, and government publications to place Haitian-American relations in their proper (Pan)American and world contexts. Her concern is about the evolution of American imperial discourse, but first and foremost, about the reality that it does not mask. The occupation of Haiti, she asserts, coming as it does early in the twentieth century, plays an

important role in the development of American paternalism, a continuation, as it were, of U.S.-style racism domestically, anchored in biology and genetics. She even broaches patterns of sexual definitions as they occur in the United States, including homosexuality. It is partly a "process" about the feminization of the enemy, any enemy. In this process, Haiti is the consummate "other." In trying to do all this and more, Renda succeeds admirably. This book is about the United States, Haiti, and the world. The Haitian case study clearly transcends Haiti, Renda argues, as the United States learns to apply the knowledge acquired in that Caribbean country in its quest for world hegemony.

Renda leaves no icon untouched. She uses but transcends earlier works, such as those of Rayford W. Logan, Hans Schmidt, and Brenda Gayle Plummer, or Bruce Calder on the Dominican Republic. In my view, her book comes closer to being an American version of sensitive Haitian historical texts and memoirs such as those by Dantés Bellegarde and Suzy Castor, and the multi-volume effort by Roger Gaillard. To all this, Renda adds a fine psychological touch, a risky proposition for a social scientist and a historian, but which she nevertheless pulls off deftly.

I tried to no avail to find flaws in Renda's text to render this review more balanced. I found none that would mar her work in any essential manner. As a first book, it augurs well for its author. Renda's work is an indictment of the United States in its behavior internationally. Though the occupation of Haiti is a mere footnote in the history of the United States and a "cataclysmic" event in Haiti's, as she writes, that occupation was overwhelming when viewed as the backdrop that would further refine "Americanness and new configurations of race, class, gender, and sexuality" (p. 28). By becoming powerful, the United States stands to make its definitions "stick" worldwide, through the ideological discourse that it introduced through globalization.

Unyielding Spirits: Black Women and Slavery in Early Canada and Jamaica. MAUREEN G. ELGERSMAN. New York: Garland, 1999. xvii + 188 pp. (Cloth US\$ 50.00)

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In 1998, the celebrated American historian James M. McPherson delivered the annual Barbara Frum Lecture in Toronto, during which he drew attention to “striking parallels” between the pre-Civil War Southern States and the situation in Quebec. In a subsequent interview on CBC radio, host Michael Enright pointed out that one major difference between the United States and Canada was that Canada “never had slavery.” Professor McPherson agreed that this was indeed a difference.

Despite the existing scholarly treatments by Barry Cahill, Kenneth Donovan, Daniel Hill, W.R. Riddell, Marcel Trudel, Robin Winks, and others, an unsettling degree of ignorance prevails about this interesting and important aspect of the Canadian experience, creating an obvious need for an accessible account explaining and locating it within the history of Canada and the history of slavery. But, perhaps unfortunately, this was not the project Maureen Elgersman set for herself. Instead, she launches a comparison of slave women in Canada and Jamaica. The immediate and most apparent problem with this approach is that the numbers, the conditions, and above all, the available sources on Canada and Jamaica are so greatly imbalanced that they make genuine comparisons unrealistic. Elgersman contends (p. 21) that she is, as she puts it, “forging new ground,” yet she has to admit to a dearth of information detailing the lives of enslaved Canadian women (p. 122). The rich materials on Jamaica are not paralleled in Canada, undermining her attempt to develop meaningful themes concerning the work, health, diet, motherhood, relationships, and resistance of women slaves. Her valiant attempt to extract significance from newspaper advertisements for sales and runaways produces intriguing suggestions rather than definitive conclusions.

Elgersman claims her study illustrates that “although Black women in Canada and Black women in Jamaica were thousands of miles apart, as women, mothers, laborers, and especially as rebels they shared similar experiences,” and in particular “they established well-documented traditions of resistance” (p. 128). It’s true there are some runaway advertisements documenting slave flight in Canada, but for arson Elgersman can bring forward

only the frequently-told story of Marie-Joseph-Angélique, who set fire to about a quarter of the city of Montreal in attempting to escape in 1734. On poisoning there is "no evidence;" on other harmful acts toward masters, "available documentation makes no reference to such incidents" (p. 117). Contraception, abortion, or infanticide? "The vacuum of information about the fertility of Black slave women in Canada makes it difficult to identify this as a sphere of conscious resistance" (p. 122). Even the comment that slave women "shared reputations for being troublesome and confrontational" has only a Jamaican citation, leaving Elgersman able to conclude nothing more than "[i]t is likely that Black women in some way took advantage of their domestic surroundings to stage acts of resistance" (p. 117). Themes, examples, and conclusions taken from Jamaica are applied to the Canadian experience and, when documentation is not available, she simply assumes that some similarities must have existed.

Apart from an unsatisfactory research base, some of Elgersman's analysis seems misdirected. In re-telling the story of Chloe Cooley, whose interrupted kidnapping back into American slavery prompted Lieutenant-Governor Simcoe to introduce his gradual emancipation act in 1793 Upper Canada, she writes: "it should be noted here that the ferocity with which Cooley resisted her treatment suggests that she experienced slavery in Canada as an invasive and inhumane institution" (p. 28). Cooley's feelings about Canadian slavery notwithstanding, her struggle was to *stay* in Canada and to resist a return to the United States. Criticizing Ida Graves and Eric Williams for assigning economic causes for the absence of plantation agriculture and therefore the limited extent of slavery in Canada, Elgersman insists that it was the lack of female slaves that accounted for the failure of slavery to develop. It is of course self-evident that with a limited number of women slaves there would be a limited number of slave children born in Canada, but surely the analytical challenge is to discern why French and English colonists neglected to import more slave women. Elgersman does not pursue this point, instead blaming the "patriarchal understanding of slavery" of previous scholarship that "does not fully consider the importance of women" (p. 16). Perhaps it was the slave-owning colonists whose comprehension was restricted.

The comparative task set for this project was confronted with difficulties from the outset, and its execution has produced some more. Nevertheless, *Unyielding Spirits* provides a reminder that the appropriation of slave labor was "gendered," in Canada as in Jamaica, and this book will make the denial of Canada's slave history less likely in the future. It may inspire, perhaps even from Elgersman herself, an analysis devoted to Canadian slavery, and one expects that the gendered approach pioneered here will inform any further studies in this promising field.

Passage from India to El Dorado: Guyana and the Great Migration. DAVID HOLLETT. Madison NJ: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 1999. 325 pp. (Cloth US\$ 54.50)

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This book follows at least six others by David Hollett. Their topics range from shipping fleets working the routes to Cape Horn and Australia and those transporting migrants from Ireland to the Americas during the famine years 1845-51, to a biography of Elder Dempster & Co., a shipping firm whose role in the slave trade and its aftermath in nineteenth-century Niger is explored hauntingly and provocatively in novelist and essayist Caryl Phillips's *The Atlantic Sound* (2000:23-92). Hollett's backlist gives some insight into *Passage from India to El Dorado*, which is somewhat misleadingly titled, at least for students of Indian indentured migration to the Anglophone Caribbean. It is less about migration than about the metropolitan families and firms – the Gladstones, with interests in both sugar and shipping, the Bookers (from which our latter-day dividend is the Booker Prize in Literature), the McConnells (their sometime-partners), and Sandbach, Tinne – that depended on, facilitated, and profited from the transportation of several hundred thousand men, women, and children from British India to sugar plantations in British Guiana.

Hollett is clearly fascinated by the maritime histories sketched by the careers of major British shipping firms. This book provides a considerable number of interesting anecdotes and much other information on the firms Hollett focuses on, and some tantalizing glimpses of the mutually reinforcing conjugal and business alliances among them. Unfortunately for academic audiences, these institutional and dynastic histories are presented in something of a historiographical vacuum. The bulk of Hollett's references to secondary sources invoke works published more than a generation ago. The most recently-published works he cites include one of his own books, entries in *The Encyclopedia Britannica* and *The Dictionary of Scottish Business Biography* (all 1995 publications or editions), and Howard Temperley's well-known *British Anti-Slavery*, published in 1972. However, it would be a pity if academic historians were to bypass Hollett's book on these grounds. His research in the archives of firms like Sandbach, Tinne may provide interesting leads for historians of indentured migration, colonial Guyana, and British capitalism, as well as for those interested in the distinct historiographical tra-

ditions associated with Eric Williams's *Capitalism and Slavery*, on the one hand, and Leonore Davidoff and Catherine Hall's *Family Fortunes* on the other.

Passage from India to El Dorado is a difficult book to place. Hollett offers no new analysis or insights into the processes or experiences of migration from India to the Caribbean, and the story and evidence he recounts here would be familiar to both scholars of the migration and Indo-Caribbean "lay" readers – the two audiences implied by the book's title.

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Gender, Ethnicity and Place: Women and Identities in Guyana. LINDA PEAKE & D. ALISSA TROTZ. London: Routledge, 1999. xii + 228 pp. (Cloth US\$ 95.00)

Hendree's Cure: Scenes from Madrasi Life in a New World. MOSES NAGAMOOTOO. Leeds, UK: Peepal Tree, 2000. 149 pp. (Paper US\$ 13.60)

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These two books make an odd pairing because of their differences in methodology, design, and purpose. The strength in juxtaposing them, however, is that both probe the relationships between identity, culture, place, and change within a world of intensifying globalization.

Gender, Ethnicity and Place is a comparative study of three contemporary low-income communities. Albouystown, a mixed Afro-Guyanese and Indo-Guyanese community, is one of the poorest and most densely populated areas

in Georgetown. Industrialized Linden, originally a company frontier mining town, is located 60 miles west of Georgetown and is primarily inhabited by Afro-Guyanese people. Meten Meer Zorg East, located 14 miles west of Georgetown, is an Indo-Guyanese settlement that borders a sugar estate. *Hendree's Cure* is about "the swamp that was once Whim" (p. 144), a fishing community that was located south of Georgetown. Whim became a government-sponsored Madras village for East Indians who chose to remain in Guyana after completing their terms of indenture. Nagamootoo's story is of the 1950s and 1960s.

Nagamootoo writes about a traditional kin-related, patriarchal Madras society that is lost. He states that attempts to revive Madras culture in Guyana have not met with any significant achievement and that his goal is to re-create, in part, the lives, generosity, love, aspirations, and oral traditions of these people. Nagamootoo, who is not an academic, claims that he has the credentials to embrace such a mission. His parents were the first generation born of Indian immigrants in Guyana. Before entering politics, he was a teacher, practiced journalism, and read law. In his book, he draws from fragments of his childhood memories. He blends fictional and documentary styles based on his "conviction that 'history' needs to be recovered not only by scholarship, but also by acts of the imagination, especially when that 'history' has barely been chronicled in terms of conventional historical texts" (p. 7). Second, he contests the idea that any one writer can monopolize the Madras experience and make authoritative claims about "certainty" and "authenticity." Nagamootoo seems saddened to see the past drift past.

Peake and Trotz, who are academics and feminists, do not share Nagamootoo's longings. Their book is an empirical analysis well grounded in a clearly articulated theoretical framework that will contribute to the feminist agenda. They believe that they have the right, and in fact the obligation, to speak for Afro-Guyanese and Indo-Guyanese women because they can make use of the authority inherent in their positions as academics to challenge global relations of patriarchies, racisms, and colonialism. Disclaiming the right to speak about low-income Guyanese women, they argue, would deny their common insertions into shared discourses. One of their primary objectives is to propose a strategy by which women can recognize and confront their oppression and empower themselves. They write that the liberalizing policies of the Cheddi Jagan regime, thirty years of development projects, and structural adjustment programs failed women. Peake and Trotz believe that women need to work through groups such as Red Thread, a Guyanese women's development agency, and need to broaden their networks beyond those of kinship in order to recognize commonalities of their subject positions. A second overarching objective of their book is to dismantle Eurocentric discursive frameworks and terms. They write that the "West" has constructed essentialized images of "Third World" women at global, regional,

national, and local geographical levels; and, in one stroke, they “decenter” western discursive practices, redefining work and family, and throwing away the Eurocentric model of the male breadwinner in a nuclear family.

Peake and Trotz propose that the dynamics of gender and ethnicity are continually constituted, challenged, and reinvented, in large part, by the globalization of flows of labor, capital, values, and ideas. They also argue, however, that, within limits, women fashion their identities for their own purposes. Furthermore, these dynamics are shaped by the past. Citing geographer Doreen Massey, they write that place is critical to the construction of identity because places are shaped out of the particular set of social relations that interact at a particular location and are constituted through dynamic and specific relations with other sites. They prove their point in a variety of ways, demonstrating how gendered identities are produced, sustained, and transformed.

While for Peake and Trotz, culture is continually in flux, Nagamootoo sees culture as an entity that has form and homogeneity. Nagamootoo occasionally mentions, but pays little attention to, flows, processes, and ideas. His book consists of a series of profiles of individuals that reinforce the claim made by Peake and Trotz that there is a matrix of acceptable and unacceptable masculine and feminine behaviors and attitudes. At the same time, he creates caricatures. Boys will be boys, and women will be sensible.

I begin with a profile of Whim. In Nagamootoo’s recreation, Whim is a place where people are ever conscious of the sea and where the Indo-Guyanese remain “intensely Madrasian and faithful to Kali spiritual practices” despite their openness to African and Christian practices (p. 7). The best friend of a key character, Naga, is a black man. The people of Whim prefer fishing and rice cultivation to work on the estates. Although Whim is a strategic market on the central Corentyne seacoast, Nagamootoo conveys the sense that it is a world to itself. Whim takes care of itself through a multitude of informal networks and traditional forms of knowledge. It heals itself. The “outside,” however, is always present in the form of “Empire” and the colonial white power brokers that perpetually hover above.

Chunoo, the wife of Naga, typifies women that Peake and Trotz describe as willingly embracing their relegation to the home. Mothering is an essential and irreducible part of her subjectivity, and she finds comfort and power in her home and in the geographically limited informal market. She activates and maintains informal network ties with family and community. She welcomes the newborn, buries the dead, feeds the needy, and reprimands the wife beaters. She well understands the meaning of “outside” male space and “inside” woman’s space. Naga, in turn, clearly takes the reader into the male spheres, spatially and conceptually. Then there is Tilokie who faces agonizing alienation when he goes to London. There, he lives with a British woman whose “whiteness and big, coconut-sized breasts compensated for any lack of beau-

ty" (p. 83). Later, when he returns home with her, he rejects her because she symbolizes British hegemony. One senses that Tilokie will, again, dissolve into the secure space of Whim. Finally I mention Aydoo and Hendree. Aydoo, an orphan saved by Chunoo, leaves Hendree when he gives up working for rum and drumming. She goes to France with a Frenchman. Hendree is the free spirit, jester, trickster, and master drummer. Perhaps Hendree best illustrates what Peake and Trotz mean when they write that within a Third World village people make sense of, use, ignore, comply with and, at times, revolt against forces that converge on them (p. 103). Hendree masterfully manipulates his world, as Peake and Trotz write, with ambivalence, contradiction, contrariness, and new behavioral and imaginative practices.

Hendree's Cure is a "manly" book. Nagamootoo finds virtue in the woman's condition and humor in the man's. He recreates a world in which a wife "almost never probed and always kept her counsel" in the face of her husband's frequent womanizing (p. 21). Whim is a place where a woman is considered most liberated because she drags her man out of the rumshop. It is a world where a woman like Chunoo bears twelve children but the husband only boasts about the number of sons he made. Nagamootoo does not seem to feel a need to refashion gender relations.

Gender, Ethnicity and Place is a fine feminist work, though at times it is difficult reading. For example, if I understand the following, I am not sure of the solution. In their analysis of Linden, Peake and Trotz write:

That changes in social practices have been accommodated to ensure the continuity of norms speaks to their threading together by the hegemony of heterosexuality. This has proved not only to tie women and men together in their mutual desires for their social reproduction of "Afro-Guyanese" but also to limit the potentially divisive consequences of economic and social changes. It has also prevented transformations ... Thus are current practices of masculinity and femininity among the Afro-Guyanese working class, and the (hetero)sexualised meanings underpinning them, part of the ongoing process of being included on their own terms in the struggle for dominance in relation to social, economic and sexual opportunities. (p. 149)

Peake and Trotz offer a non-Eurocentric analysis and refer to Stuart Hall's new regimes of power knowledge. Where are the jumbies that haunted the Whim landscape, the East Indian arranged marriage, and the mother-in-law (the old regimes of power knowledge) that have considerable power in shaping subjectivities? Are these gone? Was Whim little touched by the outside world? Was it several decades out of step? Does Nagamootoo push change too far into the background? Peake and Trotz are correct in arguing that identity is in flux and that gender positioning can change. On the other hand, I know a place, like Whim, that also seems fixed in time, despite the proliferation of shopping malls and the intrusion of the internet.

Religion, Culture, and Tradition in the Caribbean. HEMCHAND GOSSAI & NATHANIEL SAMUEL MURRELL (eds.). New York: St. Martin's Press, 2000. x + 320 pp. (Cloth US\$ 49.95)

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The Christian Bible has always been among the most widely read books in the Caribbean and – as is amply attested by the essays in the volume under review here – continues to define Caribbean reality and morality in the twenty-first century. Twelve contributors, all with formal training in theology, provide insightful and lucid examinations of many fundamental assumptions underlying different readings of the Bible at different times and places. Contributors focus on diverse topics ranging from slave narratives of the eighteenth century to twentieth-century Rastafarian chants. Collectively, the essays in this volume trace the interplay between scripture, politics, and culture in the Caribbean and highlight the struggles of Caribbean peoples to find meaning in a world they did not create.

The volume is organized in three major sections. The first focuses on the African American experience in the New World and underscores the degrees of ethnic cooperation and competition to be found in the region. This section begins with Nathaniel Samuel Murrell's provocative "Dangerous Memories, Underdevelopment, and the Bible in Colonial Caribbean Experience." Murrell deftly outlines the role of the Bible in the enslavement, colonization, and subjugation of Africans in the Americas. His chapter is followed by Janet L. DeCosmo's "Reggae and Rastafari in Salvador, Bahia: The Caribbean Connection in Brazil" which includes rare interviews with a number of prominent Brazilian Rastafarians. DeCosmo brings considerable insight into the social, cultural, and political events leading to the emergence of Rastafarianism in Brazil, and charts commonalities as well as differences among Jamaican and Brazilian Rastafarians. Gerald Boodoo's "The Faith of the People: The Divina Pastora Devotions of Trinidad," serves to illustrate the complex dynamics of ethnic cooperation and competition. It offers a thorough, detailed examination of a well-known Caribbean pilgrimage that brings together Trinidadian Catholics, Muslims, and Hindus. Boodoo also gives ample attention to the theological significance of this gathering and calls into question commonly held assumptions concerning so-called popular religions in Trinidad. Section One ends with Miguel De La Torre's "Cubans in

Babylon: Exodus and Exile,” an attempt to portray the Cuban experience in the United States as a modern version of the Babylonian exile. Inspired by the book of Ezra, De La Torre’s argument has heuristic value (many Cubans do indeed feel this way), but, as he acknowledges, the analogy is incomplete because, unlike the Jews in Babylon, Cubans constitute something of an elite in the United States. Many Cubans in the United States may never wish to return to Cuba.

Part 2 begins with Horace O. Russell’s “Understandings and Interpretations of Scripture in Eighteenth- and Nineteenth-Century Jamaica: The Baptists as Case Study.” Like other chapters in this section, Russell’s title is more ambitious than the actual scope of his essay. He promises a broad overview of the interpretation of scripture in Jamaica, but his essay is limited to a discussion of the endeavors of two prominent nineteenth-century Baptist missionaries: George Liele and William Knibb. How representative were the experiences of Liele and Knibb? Similar criticisms could be raised with regard to the chapters by John Holder and Leslie R. James. Holder’s “Is This the Word of the Lord? In Search of Biblical Theology and Hermeneutics, the Eastern Caribbean” gives but limited attention to theology and hermeneutics, and James’s “Text and the Rhetoric of Change: Bible and Decolonization in Post-World War II Caribbean Political Discourse” convincingly illustrates ways in which Caribbean politicians used scripture to forge Caribbean identities, but does not address politicians’ use of equally prominent secular metaphors. Ultimately, James fails to make his case that the Bible was central to political discourse.

On the other hand, some of the chapters in this section are more far-reaching than their titles imply. Hemchand Gossai’s “Recasting Identity in Ruth and Hindu Indo-Guyanese Women” portends specificity, but ends up as a comprehensive discussion of Old Testament hermeneutics, and J. Richard Middleton’s “Identity and Subversion in Babylon: Strategies for, Resisting Against the System, in the Music of Bob Marley and the Wailers” ends up a largely unsuccessful attempt to integrate the Genesis account with Marley’s music. Nevertheless, Richard Middleton provides innovative insights into the subversive nature of the Biblical creation story.

The third section, “Playing with Texts,” begins auspiciously enough with Noel Leo Erskine’s well-argued “Biblical Hermeneutics in Modern Caribbean Experience: Paradigms, and Prospects.” Erskine provides much more than an academic discussion, sharing a number of deeply personal experiences. Loretta Collins’s “Daughters of Jah: the Impact of Rastafarian Womanhood in the Caribbean, the United States, Britain, and Canada” is based on extensive research in Jamaica and constitutes a thorough and sympathetic overview of the roles of women in the Rasta movement.

The last two chapters are also the best. Darren J. N. Middleton’s “Riddim Wise and Scripture Smart: Interview and Interpretation with Ras Benjamin

Zephaniah" contains well selected examples from Zephaniah's poetry, useful commentary, and excerpts from a personal interview with the artist. His chapter provides an accessible introduction to Zephaniah, his life, his art, and his thought. Nathaniel Samuel Murrell's "*Holy Piby: Blackman's Bible and Garveyite Ethiopianist Epic with Commentary*" introduces a highly influential Afrocentric Caribbean-American text that inspired early Rastafarians. Murrell is to be commended for making this text available to a wider audience.

Taken as a whole, the essays in this volume critically and cogently explore ways in which Caribbean peoples have interpreted scripture. A major shortcoming, however, is that the editors do not provide sufficient background information. Murrell's brief (five-page) introduction is little more than a reiteration of the book's table of contents, and chapter and/or section summaries as well as a concluding chapter would have been helpful. Another problem is that the contributors attempt to cover too much – geographically, culturally, and theologically. Nevertheless, this collection constitutes a major advance in the study of African religions in the New World. It is highly recommended.

A History of Literature in the Caribbean. Volume 2: English- and Dutch-Speaking Regions. A. JAMES ARNOLD (ed.) (Vera M. Kuzinski & Ineke Phaf-Rheinberger, sub-eds.). Amsterdam/Philadelphia: John Benjamins, 2001. ix + 672 pp. (Cloth US\$ 182.00)

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In July 1997, Kenneth Ramchand, author of the well-known *The West-Indian Novel and its Background*, attended a conference on Surinamese and Caribbean literature in Paramaribo. He could not believe his ears and eyes. Was it really true: were there people living in the far end of the Caribbean, and how was it possible that he had never heard of the interesting texts written in the West Indies?

With Volume 2 of *A History of Literature in the Caribbean*, A. James Arnold has brought this three-volume project to an end. Volume 1 dealt with Hispanic and Francophone regions; Volume 3 presented "cross-cultural studies," and now Volume 2 focuses on the English- and Dutch-speaking

regions. For the first time an overview of Caribbean literature, from the earliest oral texts up to present-day literary experiments, is presented in some 1700 pages. In a way, this is the most innovative volume: for the first time the Dutch-speaking regions, Suriname, the Netherlands Antilles, and Aruba, were granted their color in the Caribbean rainbow ("Dutch" – and "English" – referring synecdochically to a range of Amerindian, creole, and Indian languages as well). Ramchand – not present among the hundred scholars contributing to this history – no longer has an excuse for dealing with West-Indian literature as the unique domain of those who speak English. Welcome to the world.

There has never been a clear, paradigmatic guideline for the authors contributing to the three volumes, but one might nevertheless discover some unity in the way the editor and his sub-editors have tried to manage the project. All authors try not to look at their respective regions from the outside, but take them as point of departure (what Jack Corzani called *recentrage*). Literature is considered as a social institution within the field of municipal versus cosmopolitan forces. Finally the conditions of literary production and consumption are charted. Scholars like Antonio Benítez-Rojo, with his "chaos theory," and Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, with their "rhizome concept," disclaim the existence of any centrifugal force in the Caribbean (very helpful ideas to the historian indeed!); no wonder the overall structure of *A History of Literature in the Caribbean* needs some improvisation and filling in here and there.

Volume 2 reflects the state of literary scholarship insofar as the English section presents more synthesizing contributions than the Dutch section. Extensive research has already been done on Caribbean writing in English (James, Lamming, Walcott, Naipaul), so it was possible to achieve a clear structuring of the material in eleven essays on language use, literature as an institutional phenomenon, and contributions on the literature of Trinidad, Jamaica, and Guyana, and on several genres. In contrast, the Dutch section is a pepperpot with all kinds of flavors, some of them rather strange. No less than twenty-two essays needed four introductory and concluding paragraphs by sub-editor Ineke Phaf. The flying nurse does what she thinks is necessary on the battlefield caused by the fragmentation bomb of the Dutch-speaking section, but is it enough? Why for instance refer to the oracular language of Homi Bhabha, understood by nobody but himself? As far as the structuring of the section is concerned, why include two purely linguistic essays by Pieter Muysken and Frank Martinus Arion, which simply do not fit into a history of literature? Why include *three* essays on Antillean literary magazines and not bring them into a synthesis? Ineke Phaf's essay on the *Essai historique* (1788) by David Nassy is a fine piece of work in itself, but the *Essai* is not a literary text. Of course, it is nice to meet with Vernie February's opinions on his literary friends of the 1960s and 1970s again, but it might be considered a disadvantage that he obviously has not read any book for the last twenty years.

And then one could pose many questions about the details: Did H.F. Rikken write the first Surinamese novel? No, he did not. Did Rikken's historical novel *Codjo, de brandstichter* have "the aim of creating a concept of the nation in his native country?" No, on the contrary, I would say. Does Sranan "take over the dominant narrative function" in Cynthia McLeod's novels? No, it does not, because it is only sometimes used in dialogues, on perhaps a third of the pages. How can Phaf speak of McLeod's "nineteenth-century technique of traditional Surinamese storytelling" without mentioning the real nineteenth-century novels (using Sranan) by Kwamina? Where does she get the idea that Leo Ferrier published his novels in Suriname?

Not all of my questions will find answers in "the present state of literary scholarship," a state nevertheless more mature than this volume suggests. And it should be said that the editors have paid the price for the all-too-long period of fifteen years that this Caribbean literary history was in preparation. Still, the book is a very important one. Any researcher in the field of Caribbean literature can get some idea of what has been done already. And there is always the load of bibliographical references, helping readers out of *chaos* and *rhizome*.

Derek Walcott: A Caribbean Life. BRUCE KING. New York: Oxford University Press, 2000. ix + 714 pp. (Cloth US\$ 39.95)

Derek Walcott: Politics and Poetics. PAULA BURNETT. Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2001. xiii + 380 pp. (Cloth US\$ 55.00)

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No two books on the same subject could be more different than these. Both examine the artistic achievement of Derek Walcott, the West Indian poet/playwright and man of letters, but Bruce King's *Derek Walcott: A Caribbean Life* is self-evidently a biography that seeks to relate Walcott's life story and explicate some of his texts, while Paula Burnett's *Derek Walcott: Politics and Poetics* is mainly concerned with a theoretical and textual exegesis of Walcott's poetry and plays. King relates events in Walcott's biography, step by chronological step, from the very beginning to the present day. Burnett shuns chronology, and makes references to Walcott's texts in random order, as

suits the theoretical or thematic argument she is making. It would be a mistake, all the same, to regard these books as somehow opposed or rivaling each other. Rather are they complementary; what readers miss in the first, they are likely to get in the second, and vice versa.

Both books confirm Walcott's stature as a pre-eminent writer in the world today, and probably the finest poet now writing in English. They also confirm that he fully deserves the Nobel prize for literature that he won in 1992. More importantly, they catch the significance of this achievement in the Caribbean, showing that Walcott's success signifies not merely a talented individual's victory over personal obstacles, but his resounding triumph over wider restrictions of a Caribbean colonial environment, in the middle of the twentieth century.

Walcott was born on the island of St. Lucia in 1930, attended school there, and in 1948 won a scholarship to the newly-opened University College of the West Indies in Jamaica. After graduation and brief teaching jobs in various Caribbean locations, he settled in Trinidad for about two decades beginning in 1959. During this time, he frequently visited abroad, chiefly the United States, where he eventually bought a house in Boston in the early 1980s.

Having launched his writing career with a precocious, self-published volume, *25 Poems*, in 1948, Walcott continued to produce poems that caught the attention of local and foreign critics, and gradually brought him recognition during the 1960s and 1970s. This was also the period when he established the Trinidad Theatre Workshop and wrote and produced plays that further enhanced his growing reputation as an artist. One striking feature of this breakthrough, in the early, postcolonial period of Caribbean literature, is that while most of his fellow West Indian writers (Lamming, Selvon, Naipaul, Salkey, and many others) had to go abroad to achieve success, Walcott did what was then thought to be impossible: he gained international recognition as a poet/playwright while remaining in the Caribbean.

The chief merit of King's biography is twofold – its capaciousness (over 700 pages, including a dubious effort to include apparently every scrap of information about Walcott), and its clarity of writing and presentation. The book is divided into eight parts with general titles, and more specific chapter headings with dates and descriptions of their contents. Together with the simple, chronological structure, this organization allows us to follow the narrative with ease.

As for the life story itself, we are told what seems like everything, from Walcott's crucial, mixed-blood parentage (his father was the illegitimate son of a white Barbadian and a brown St. Lucian woman, while his mother was a brown woman born in St. Maarten) to myriad details about his childhood, family influences, schooling, social and religious background, three failed marriages, recurring financial worries, literary influences, readings and presentations, struggles with publishers, changing relationships with writers,

quarrels with theater directors, and critical reception of his work. Most meticulous of all is King's recording of the evolution of Walcott's own reaction to literary, cultural and political issues, for example, his objections to the Trinidad manifestation of Black Power in the 1970s, and his own painful efforts to resolve problems of identity resulting from his mixed racial heritage.

Much of this information is not only interesting but essential. It is interesting that, in high school, Walcott failed to win the biannual government scholarship that would have taken him to England instead of Jamaica for his B.A., for this could have changed his career entirely. And it is essential to learn that Walcott produced a novel ("Passage to Paradise") that was never accepted for publication, and that he wrote a short, autobiographical essay ("Inside the Cathedral") and a full-length autobiography ("American, Without America") both of which also remain unpublished. Whether it is helpful to learn that Walcott's autobiography was modeled on Boris Pasternak's *Safe Conduct* is more doubtful, because Pasternak does not appear to influence the rest of his work.

Derek Walcott: A Caribbean Life collects information rather indiscriminately, providing, for example, accounts of readings or presentations by Walcott, accompanied by copious detail of the preparations, individuals involved, and repercussions, plus comments on other speakers and their opinions. There are also discussions about the different modes of transport Walcott is offered for particular events. One senses that a thin line is crossed between responsible reporting and mere reportage. Some repetition occurs as well, for example, in reports of Walcott's start at University in Jamaica, the revelation that he never learned to drive, and the observation that the Southern Caribbean is different from Jamaica. There are also minor errors: "British Guyana" appears throughout for "British Guiana," and Shirley Gordon was Canadian, not English. In such a lengthy work, blemishes are expected, but the enthusiasm for apparently unnecessary detail is asking for trouble.

By contrast, Paula Burnett's *Derek Walcott: Politics and Poetics*, just more than half the length of King's book, is a model of economy and tight construction. Burnett's writing, geared to a predominantly academic audience, probably originated in a Ph.D. thesis, since it zealously advances the views of theorists who are in fashion as commentators on postcolonial literature, for example, Homi Bhabha, Frantz Fanon, Edward Said, Stuart Hall, Salman Rushdie, and the authors of *The Empire Writes Back*, not to mention theorists in general – Francis Fukuyama, Roland Barthes, Julia Kristeva, Jacques Lacan, Walter Benjamin, Gilles Deleuze, and Felix Guattari.

Yet it is not only direct reference to these critics that occasionally proves inaccessible. It is also Burnett's own diction which has absorbed enough of their density of idiom and some of their opacity of meaning. She writes, for example: "Walcott's practice is heterodox: he engages with centrism, with the

literary canon and with the symbols of hegemony, in order to subvert their dominance and inscribe his people's difference" (p.126). It is debatable how much more a sentence like this conveys than if Burnett had said that Walcott subverts prevailing classical models of literature by employing local images, symbols, and myths from his own mixed cultural background. Such diction sharply differentiates Burnett's writing from King's, but her book has an equally coherent structure. Also, as one might expect from an explicit work of criticism, her book yields more concentrated critical insight into Walcott's poems and plays.

Derek Walcott: Politics and Poetics is divided into two parts – "Ideology," which offers a survey of Walcott's ideas and aesthetic strategies, and "Craft," in which particular texts or specific genres of Walcott's writing are explicated. Burnett is very good on Walcott's aesthetic and technical strategies, particularly the mythopoeic framework of his thought, and the epic form which he frequently employs. She acknowledges that Walcott is to the Caribbean what Homer was to classical antiquity, or Dante to the medieval world: in other words, Walcott's work encompasses and illuminates the whole of human experience in his region and period. In the following sentence, which happily proves that not all her writing is dense, Burnett spells out Walcott's purpose as a poet: "Walcott's work can be regarded as an epic project to name the Caribbean nation to itself and to the world, his two great epic poems providing distinct variants on this" (p. 94). As we also know from King's book, Walcott has said as much himself at different times, most eloquently in his essay "What the Twilight Says," and we can see how this naming effort, on a national scale, contributes to the largeness of vision in Walcott's two epic poems, *Another Life* and *Omeros*.

Another Life carries out this naming process largely through an autobiographical structure that is concerned with the poet's childhood and artistic development, and later with political issues in his region. *Omeros*, on the other hand, a work of Walcott's high maturity, envisages key elements in the historical and cultural formation of the Caribbean, while staging a grand attempt to deconstruct the glory of the classical world of Greece and Rome by launching what Burnett calls a "counter discourse" to the "canonical" authority of Homer and other classical writers.

In the process of this counter discourse, Walcott suggests that the Caribbean Sea may, in its own way, also be seen as a theater of exploits and feats of human endeavor as heroic or glorious as those in the Mediterranean Sea celebrated and sanctified by Homer. This is surprisingly optimistic. Because the history of the Caribbean is one of colonial exploitation and abuse, it is natural for poets and artists to lament colonial injustice and its adverse legacy in the post-colonial era. This is exactly the point, for Burnett claims that, in spite of continuing postcolonial adversity, Walcott's work strikes a note of affirmation: "He [Walcott] understands his task as to make

the rhetoric of affirmation – the praise song – outdo in appeal the rhetoric of grief that leads to recrimination” (p. 79).

As in so many other details, this claim by Burnett is corroborated by King, for example, in his discussion of the relationship between Walcott and V.S. Naipaul. According to King, of all West Indian writers, Walcott considered Naipaul his chief rival. But his admiration for Naipaul changed when he realized that Naipaul’s comments, claiming to be isolated and alone in his career as a West Indian writer, directly opposed Walcott’s own positive, and quite optimistic celebration of the wholeness of West Indian community. Other essential points of agreement between Burnett and King are Walcott’s undivided sense of patriotism as a West Indian Federalist and nationalist, and his fundamental belief in the mixed, multicultural, multiracial nature of Caribbean, creole civilization.

As different as these two books may be then, there is scarcely any disagreement between their authors on the essential beliefs and achievement of Derek Walcott. In numerous cases, Burnett and King rely on identical quotations or references to illustrate various points, for example, the familiar quotation from Robert Graves asserting that Walcott’s 1962 collection of poems, *In a Green Night*, showed that he had greater awareness of the inner music of English than English poets themselves. Even if strictly academic readers prefer Burnett’s book, they should be reminded that there is much in King’s book to buttress research into the achievement of Derek Walcott.

Karukéra: Présence littéraire de la Guadeloupe. MICHELINE RICE-MAXIMIN. New York: Peter Lang, 1998. x + 197 pp. (Paper US\$ 29.95)

L’esclave fugitif dans la littérature antillaise: Sur la déclive du morne. MARIE-CHRISTINE ROCHMANN. Paris: Karthala, 2000. 408 pp. (Paper € 24.39)

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Taking as a starting point the Carib name (*Karukéra*) for the island now known as Guadeloupe, Micheline Rice-Maximin sets out to define its specificity from historical, literary, and cultural perspectives. Indeed, the book rightly bills itself as an ancestral archeology and a literary genealogy of the

historical figures and symbols that constitute Guadeloupean collective memory. The book is divided into three sections – *l'écriture du passé* (writing the past), *l'écriture de l'histoire* (writing history), and *l'histoire d'une écriture* (history of writing). Organized in short chapters, the book is rather more encyclopedic than analytical in that it provides a guide to a number of important symbols, documents, historical figures, and events in Guadeloupean culture, history, and literature. Themes include the forest, locus of marronage (resistance to slavery), the transmission of African oral traditions, the storyteller, and the grandmother as an ancestral figure. Information on such historical figures as Joseph Ignace, Louis Delgrès, la mulâtresse Solitude, and Victor Schoelcher is included, as well as the text of the Proclamation of Louis Delgrès. Calling herself a "*lectrice avertie*" (informed reader), Rice-Maximin, who is from Guadeloupe herself and is the sister of the novelist Daniel Maximin, provides perspectives on her culture, history, and literature that students and scholars alike will find helpful in their approaches to such writers as Dany Bébel-Gisler, Maryse Condé, Max Jeanne, Odet Maria, Daniel Maximin, Ernest Moutoussamy, Gisèle Pineau, Sonny Rupaïre, Simone Schwarz-Bart, and others.

Both Micheline Rice-Maximin and Marie-Christine Rochmann quote Edouard Glissant's declaration that "*le Nègre marron est le seul vrai héros populaire des Antilles*" (the fugitive slave is the only true popular hero of the Antilles). However, Rice-Maximin devotes a chapter to the *marron*, while Rochmann's *L'esclave fugitif...* is 400 pages in length. Rochmann states that it was while reading Patrick Chamoiseau's *Texaco* (1992) that the idea for her study was conceived. For rather than portraying the *marron* as a popular hero, *Texaco* proposes a new image, denying the heroic attributes that Glissant had accorded to the *marron*. In fact, in this masterful study of French West Indian literature from 1830 to 1998, Rochmann demonstrates that rather than being an unchanging mythic figure or character type, the *marron* undergoes a number of transformations that reflect the historical and social contexts in which the literary works were conceived.

While the premise that the figure of the *marron* evolves according to changes in French West Indian society and history may at first seem to be self-evident, the value of this work lies in its knowledgeable grounding in that very history and society. (Rochmann explains that the histories of Haiti and French Guiana are outside the scope of the study, although she often refers to Haiti's role as model and she includes Guianese Bertène Juminer's *Les Batards* and *Au seuil d'un nouveau cri* in her study.) Indeed, the book opens with a chapter on the history and historiography of Martinique and Guadeloupe, pointing out that while history and literature have often been related, the quest to unearth the silenced histories of the colonized and enslaved has meant that writers and historians have worked even more closely together in the twentieth century. Thus, as the histories of Martinique

and Guadeloupe were revised, with the accompanying transformation of the image of the enslaved from passive subalterns to resistance fighters, these revisions touched French West Indian literature. In fact, it is part of Rochmann's project to analyze what she calls the "surprising dialogism between historiography and literature in the Antilles" (p. 13). She does just that in detailed analyses of an impressive number of literary works (about seventy-five) by white creole and "metropolitan" writers and writers of color.

Rochmann divides her corpus into a number of periods, each based on pivotal historical and/or literary events. The publication in 1833 of the first of about twenty works by white creole writers constitutes the beginning of the first period, which ends with the definitive abolition of slavery in the French colonies in 1848. As Rochmann demonstrates, the *marron* in these works is constructed as subaltern and is relegated to an existence outside of History. The following period, 1850-80, encompasses the aftermath of the abolition of slavery and the publication of literary works where the *marron* is allowed to speak for the first time, albeit in works by white creole writers. It is also during this period that *Uncle Tom's Cabin* by Harriet Beecher Stowe was published (1852), and Rochmann eruditely traces the rewriting of this text by Dumanoir and D'Ennery, white creoles who insert their own prejudices into the tale. Since French Antillean literary works published at the end of the nineteenth century and during the first twenty years of the twentieth century only refer in passing to slavery, Rochmann jumps to the year 1925 as the beginning date of a period that includes studies of works by Drasta Houel, Sully Lara, Léonard Sainville, César Pulvar, and Raphaël Tardon (in the fourth chapter), and Aimé Césaire, René Clarac, and Bertène Juminer (in the fifth), ending with the year 1963. While she traces the emergence of the slave as a heroic figure in both of these chapters, she divides the writers and their work according to whether they treat slavery as a period of the past (Chapter 4), or as a force whose interest lies in its relation to the present (Chapter 5). Chapter 6 focuses on the year 1964, the publication date of Edouard Glissant's *Le quatrième siècle*, where, according to Rochmann, the *marron* is finally and fully mythified in Longoué, the hero of the novel. Chapters 7, 8, and 9 are devoted to the final period, 1970-98. Chapter 7 analyzes the rewriting of marronage in a number of Glissant's works, and concludes with an analysis of his *Tout-Monde* (1993). Rochmann posits that, as a text that celebrates "creolization" rather than an identity of origins as represented by the *marron*, *Tout-Monde* ushers in a new type of marronage that engages the entire world. This also inaugurates the period of the *déclive du morne* ("downward slope") of Rochmann's subtitle and seems apt to describe the *marron*'s measured "entry" into new textual relationships. Chapter 8, devoted to Maryse Condé, Daniel Maximin, and André and Simone Schwarz-Bart, identifies Guadeloupean literature as the possessor of this multiple heritage (although the publication of each of the works analyzed in this chapter pre-

date the publication of *Tout-Monde*); where Maximin and the Schwarz-Barts maintain the *marron* as a figure of Origins, Maryse Condé chooses demythification. It is in Chapter 9, however, devoted to the work of Martinicans Roland Brival and Patrick Chamoiseau, that the metaphor of Rochmann's subtitle is most apt. Indeed, her intelligent analyses of the works of Patrick Chamoiseau in particular demonstrate that for that theoretician of *créolité*, the *marron* must no longer be isolated from the population at large, but must "come down from the mountain" in order to mix with the people at the heart of the economic life of the island, the city. Rochmann finds the key to Chamoiseau's understanding of marronage in *Lettres créoles* (1991, with Raphaël Confiant) where it is the storyteller who inherits the cry emitted from the belly of the slave ship, but in the context of the plantation rather than that of the *morne*. In linking the site of resistance to the figure of the storyteller, says Rochmann, marronage thus becomes for Chamoiseau a primarily literary activity. In the conclusion to her book, Rochmann wonders: whither the *marron*, now that the master has been overthrown? This book has the merit of having clearly traced the path that s/he has taken thus far.

Women at Sea: Travel Writing and the Margins of Caribbean Discourse. LIZABETH PARAVISINI-GEBERT & IVETTE ROMERO-CESAREO (eds.). New York: Palgrave, 2001. x + 301 pp. (Cloth US\$ 55.00)

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The introduction to this collection makes much of the multiple meaning of *margins*, which can refer both to the social location occupied by those deprived of economic or political power, and to the empty space that borders the written page. Accordingly, then, the travelers who are the subject of the various essays here are typically marginalized in various ways: as women, as outlaws and exiles, as travel writers excluded from the literary canon, or, indeed, as non-writers, whose story has come down to us only through the mediating words of others. At the same time, many of the essays concern European or North American visitors to the Caribbean, who inevitably occupy a relatively privileged position in relation to the people they encounter. Aphra Behn's *Oroonoko*, for instance, offers a "theoretical justification for the English appropriation of the New World" (p. 44), although

Richard Frohock shows that her attempt to ground this in something more benign than violence is ultimately unsuccessful. Other visitors, such as the cross-dressing pirates, Anne Bonny and Mary Read, and African American travelers, such as Mary Prince, Nancy Prince, Zora Neale Hurston, and Katherine Dunham, although shunned or neglected in their countries of origin, are represented by texts which to some degree might be said to act as “the lettered arm of ... imperialism” (p. 100), unable to escape “forms of imperial authority” (p. 164).

Three essays consider travel in the opposite direction. Luisa Campuzano provides a useful summary of writings by Cuban visitors to the United States in the late nineteenth century, and Aileen Schmidt compares and contrasts the forced migrations and political exile recorded in the letters of two Cubans (Aurelia Castillo de González and Catalina Rodríguez de Morales) and one Puerto Rican (Lola Rodríguez de Tió) during the same period. Ivette Romero-Cesareo counterposes the intersecting stories of Adèle Hugo (daughter of the famous novelist) and the former slave Céline Alvarez Baa (who nursed her back to health in Barbados, and took her home to France) to that of the Jamaican Mary Seacole, who alone wrote of her adventures (in Central America and the Crimea) and was able therefore to “portray herself, as she wishes” (p. 154).

In an intermediate category of its own, here, is the three-volume *La Havane* (1844) by the Countess of Merlin, returning (via the United States) to Cuba after many years in France. Claire Emilie Martin examines the author’s oscillation between Creole and European identities and shows how her less than generous remarks on the inhabitants attracted bitter criticism in the local press.

The collection offers a wide range of approaches and styles, from the surveys of whole bodies of work (such as the re-tellings of the story of Bonny and Read over several centuries) to the conceptual ingenuity of Jose Piedra’s “queer” reading of the gender-bending *Naufraios* (1542) by Cabeza de Vaca, whose Afro-Hispanic prophetesses are shown to de-polarize the usual binary oppositions of “transatlantic discourse.” Most provocative of all is Mario Cesareo, whose analysis of *The History of Mary Prince* opens with a bold distinction between the “destabilizing, decentering” experience of travel and the domesticating function of travel writing, a function reinforced – he argues – by scholars such as Mary Louise Pratt (whose concept of the “contact zone” is a frequent reference point for many of the contributors). If this seems unduly simplistic, his subsequent discussion of the slave narrative and the genre of the picaresque modifies it considerably, leading Cesareo to offer some searching responses to Gayatri Spivak’s famous question he rephrases as: “can the subaltern travel?”

Many of the contributors assess their chosen texts in terms of the extent to which they violate or subvert dominant norms, either of “feminine” passivity or “colonial” arrogance. None of them offer easy answers, but only as

we reach the twentieth century toward the end of the book do we find a consideration of the possible tensions between domestic feminist and anti-imperialist agendas. Kevin Meehan expertly teases out the “gender analysis” in Hurston’s much-maligned ethnography of Haiti and Jamaica in *Tell My Horse* (1938), suggesting that her silence on the oppression of women in the United States is not a sign of complacency on this point, but rather makes it possible for her to express solidarity with Caribbean women without grounding it in an assumed equivalence of their respective conditions. Continually marking her position as an outsider, Hurston nevertheless allows her writing to be overrun with a range of dissenting voices, as if the narrator were “possessed” by vodun spirits. In the “Epilogue” to the collection that immediately follows, Joan Dayan finds Dunham’s *Island Possessed* (1969) similarly “haunted” by figures and scenes from Haiti’s past.

In both cases, a certain – if contrived – loss of narrative control serves to draw attention to an instructive gap between the authors’ professional struggle for recognition (as anthropologists and creative artists) and the rather different, vernacular strategies of empowerment they come across in the Caribbean. This enables them to “negotiate ‘first’ world / ‘third’ world divisions between women” (p. 271) in ways that bring together many of the various strands of this informative and thought-provoking collection.